



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF WHATCOM COUNTY

# **Athletic Department Parent/Guardian Guide**

**Bellingham • Ferndale**

**GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.****

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF WHATCOM COUNTY**

1616 Cornwall Avenue, Suite 111 · Bellingham, WA 98225 · 360-527-9777 EXT 2 · [www.whatcomclubs.org](http://www.whatcomclubs.org)

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# THE BGCWC ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

## Mission and Values

The Mission Statement of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Whatcom County is: “Enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.”

The BGCWC Athletic Department encourages a positive environment for youth to thrive through sports. We advocate for a fun, safe, and supportive space for youth to grow as individuals and as team members. Our goals promote an environment where youth can learn important life lessons, positive character traits, and develop healthy habits for an active lifestyle.

## Athletic Department Goals

- Players will end the season with a love of the sport and their team
- Players’ understanding of the sport will improve
- All players will get as much meaningful playing time as possible
- Players will learn the value of participation and sportsmanship
- Players will improve in self-esteem, resiliency, leadership, and health
- The coaches will enjoy the season as much as the players

## Formula for Impact

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Whatcom County utilize a “Formula for Impact” that provides a roadmap for our programs. The Formula represents the five key elements for positive youth development:

1. A safe, positive environment
2. Fun
3. Supportive relationships
4. Opportunities and expectations
5. Recognition

## What do kids need in youth sports? *From the Positive Coaching Alliance*

- Feeling connected to teammates and coach
- Believing they can improve
- Feeling proud of what they are a part of

## Contact and Hours

<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:athletics@whatcomclubs.org">athletics@whatcomclubs.org</a>	<b>Phone:</b> (360) 527-9777 ext. 2
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### **Bellingham Club**

1715 Kentucky St.  
Bellingham, WA 98229

Office hours: M-F 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM\*, or by  
appointment

\*Office hours are subject to change

### **Ferndale Club**

2015 Cherry Street  
Ferndale, WA 98248

Office hours: M-Th 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM\*. or by  
appointment

\*Office hours are subject to change

### **Athletics Staff**

Athletic Director - Hanifah McGovern  
(360) 527-9777 ext. 222  
[hmcgovern@whatcomclubs.org](mailto:hmcgovern@whatcomclubs.org)

Athletic Program Manager - Dorothy Rake  
(360) 527-9777 ext. 220  
[drake@whatcomclubs.org](mailto:drake@whatcomclubs.org)

Coach & Communication Liaison - Augie Potter  
(360) 527-9777 ext. 219  
[apotter@whatcomclubs.org](mailto:apotter@whatcomclubs.org)

### **Club Closings and Changes in Hours of Operations**

Please make yourself aware of flyers, emails, or posted announcements regarding any events that might result in closures or cancellations. Athletics staff make their best effort to notify or remind coaches of any impending dates of Club closures or changes in operating hours. In the event that a game is cancelled due to inclement weather, we will publish it to our Athletics website on the relevant sport page. The B&GC gyms are closed for practices/games on picture days.

BGCWC offices and Clubs are closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Day, MLK Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, Day after Christmas.

The Athletic Department may close or alter their operating hours at other times for staff in-services and other occasions. Please view the Athletics website for updates on closures.

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## Background Checks

If you have been asked or would like to offer to be a parent helper during practices, you **must** fill out our Athletics volunteer application prior to working with youth other than your own child(ren). Your participation is contingent upon passing both State and National background checks that we run. Barrier crimes that would prohibit an applicant from volunteering at the BGCWC:

- Any felony conviction
- All crimes against children, including pornography, child molestation, child abuse, abandonment, child neglect, enticing a child into a motor vehicle, structure or isolated area and/or endangering the welfare of a child

Any misdemeanor conviction involving:

- Force or threat of force
- Crimes involving sexual assault, rape, criminal sexual contact or lewdness
- Controlled substances
- Cruelty to animals

For ongoing commitments lasting more than a year, we run an annual background check for each volunteer. Volunteers cannot use background checks from other agencies or employment, in lieu of the BGCWC process.

## Supervision

All children must be supervised by an adult at all times. The coach is only responsible for the players on their team, **not** a child's siblings or friends. If siblings are watching a practice or game, they must be supervised and should refrain from playing on the courts or fields that are being used before, during, or after practices and games. This allows teams to use their whole space for their scheduled time without interference.

## Smoking, Drugs, and Alcohol Policy

Alcohol, drugs, smoking, and the use of tobacco and vaping products are prohibited inside ALL Clubs as well as on Club property, ballfields, and BGCWC events. Volunteers should never engage in any activity with Club Members or take part in B&GC activities while under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances. Furthermore, volunteers are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful or unauthorized manufacture, distribution, or possession of illegal substances on Club time or on Club premises. BGCWC reserves the right to take all appropriate and lawful actions to enforce this substance abuse policy when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a volunteer has violated this policy.

## Gym Rules

Our gyms have standard rules which are centered around respect and safety. Rules that are universal at all B&GC gyms are:

- Use positive language, and choose not to swear
- Abuse of referees by spectators or volunteers is not tolerated
- No gum in the gym
- No food or drink in the gym other than water
- Non-marking gym (tennis) shoes are required
- Respect B&GC equipment and property and use as intended
- Notify staff immediately of spills, broken equipment, or hazards
- No hanging on the nets, hoops, or other equipment
- Put all balls in the ball cart at the end of practices and games
- Respect the start and end times of your assigned practice
- Respect, kindness, and sportsmanship are expected at all times

Volunteers, staff, spectators, and Club Members are expected to follow these rules at all times.

## Field Rules

The fields we use for outdoor sports have standard rules which are centered around respect and safety. Rules that are universal at all fields are:

- Use positive language, and choose not to swear
- Abuse of umpires/referees by spectators or volunteers is not tolerated
- Pick up and throw garbage away in the garbage cans
- Respect B&GC equipment and property and use as intended
- Notify staff immediately of broken equipment or hazards
- Respect the start and end times of your assigned practice
- Do not warm up on groomed dirt infields prior to a baseball game
- Respect, kindness, and sportsmanship are expected at all times

Volunteers, staff, spectators, and Club Members are expected to follow these rules at all times.

## Honor the Game

One of the main components of our Athletics curriculum is for players to learn the importance of Honoring the Game by showing respect. To help you and your child remember to Honor the Game, use the acronym ROOTS: respect for the Rules, Opponents, Officials, Team, and Self. It is recommended to talk often about respect with your child on and off the field/court. As a parent/guardian, you are a role model of Honoring the Game by showing respect and good sportsmanship while spectating.

## **Spectator Tips**

Children are easily influenced by the attitudes and behaviors of those around them, especially parents/adults. Remember to be a positive role model at all times and follow our Code of Conduct (see Appendix B).

- Remember that the B&GC focuses on fun and skill development over winning or losing
- Children thrive on positive feedback
- Encourage children to move on from mistakes
- Let the coach do the coaching without interference
- Respect the official's decisions, even if you disagree
- Lead by example - be positive and supportive of all players and encourage good sportsmanship
- Remain outside of the field of play and the team area unless you are a coach

## **Supporting your Child**

- Be their parent, not their coach/critic. Provide support and encouragement and help boost self-esteem
- Teach the importance of mistakes and failure as opportunities to learn and grow
- Encourage your child's learning process by focusing on their progress and development instead of outcomes/results
- Define success as making your best effort and not about winning/losing
- Listen and respect your child's opinion and emotions
- Celebrate successes with your child

## FAQs

### **What does the Annual Membership fee cover?**

In order to play sports at the B&GC, your child is required to be a member with the B&GC. This is an annual \$40 fee that is valid from June 1st to May 31st of the following year.

The Annual Membership fee covers liability insurance in case something were to happen during a scheduled B&GC event. It also gives access to the services at our Clubhouses for the school year. Our Clubhouses offer after school care along with a meal and a snack. The after school programs boast enriching academic, social, and healthy activities where youth can enjoy a safe, supportive environment. Depending on the Clubhouse, there may be transportation available to the Clubhouse from local schools. Some Clubhouse locations also offer before school programming at additional cost.

If you are interested in participating in the Clubhouse programs, please call the Clubhouse lines directly, which can be found on our website [www.whatcomclubs.org](http://www.whatcomclubs.org).

### **Who are the coaches?**

Our coaches are all volunteers. Most coaches are parents of a child on their team. We also recruit coaches from local colleges and other interested community members. All coaches must pass State and Federal background checks prior to coaching as well as a coaching orientation. We offer as many coach trainings and additional resources as possible to help our coaches provide the best possible experience to their teams.

### **Where and when are practices?**

Practices are held at the local Boys & Girls Clubs gyms, local school gyms, or local fields, depending on the sport (see Appendix A). Practices are typically scheduled 1-2 times per week in the evenings. Most of our coaches have full time jobs and other commitments to balance, so we allow them to request the days that work best for them to allow them to be involved. We create the practice schedule after we receive a practice request form from the coach at our Coaches Meeting, which occurs after registration. If a player is struggling to attend their scheduled practice time, we work closely with the coach and family to try to find an alternate time that works for as many parties as possible. After games begin, the practice schedule may change slightly, depending on the sport and practice space availability.

### **When is the game schedule posted?**

Games are divided between the local Boys & Girls Clubs gyms, local school gyms, or local fields, depending on the sport (see Appendix A). The Athletic Department releases the game schedule after practices begin and try to release it in a timely manner. Please always check



game times and locations with your coach prior to a game, as they will be the first ones to be notified of game schedule changes before it is published on the website.

**How will I know if a game is cancelled due to weather?**

In the event that a game is cancelled due to inclement weather, we will publish it to our Athletics website on the relevant sport page. We also make every attempt to call each head coach.

**What if my child gets hurt during a practice or game?**

All practices and games held at a Boys & Girls Club location will have a staff member on hand who can help administer basic first aid. Please find a staff member to help you.

If you are playing a game at a non-Boys & Girls Club location (i.e. Lummi Nation School), a representative for that site should be present and able to offer similar assistance. If you are practicing at a school and no assistance is immediately available, seek out professional medical assistance as needed.

B&GC staff are trained only to address basic first aid needs and are not medical professionals. In the event of a serious injury always call 911 or seek professional medical attention as appropriate. If this should occur please notify the Boys & Girls Club as soon as possible so that we can provide support or assistance as needed.

**We aren't able to continue the season because of \_\_\_\_\_. Can I get a refund?**

Our refund policy states:

- Membership fees are non-refundable and are not prorated for any reason.
- Athletic Fee refunds will be given as a credit that can be used by any child in the household for one year from the date of credit and only if the participant is injured and has an excuse from a doctor stating that they are unable to participate. If the injury occurs prior to the start of practices a 50% credit will be granted. If an injury occurs after the first practice no credit will be granted. Athletics participants who have received financial aid will be credited 50% of their out of pocket portion paid to participate in accordance with the schedule stated above and you forfeit all financial assistance granted for that program.
- If a program is canceled by Boys & Girls Clubs, a full refund will be given. If you feel that you have an extenuating circumstance that you would like to have considered outside of this policy, you are welcome to submit your request with supporting documentation to the administrative offices for review.

# SEASON INFORMATION

## Registration

Our registration process for all sports is online on the Parent Portal <https://parentportal.whatcomclubs.org/>. Once you create an account, write down your username and password and keep it somewhere safe and easy for you to find. After you have created an account for the first time, simply log in and click the “Enroll” tab to enroll your child(ren) in the available sports.

If you register within our registration window, you will be placed on a team. If you register during our wait-list period, we will notify you if there is space on a team for your child(ren).

## Rosters

If you would like to request a coach or to play with a particular player, please fill out our online [Coach/Team Request Form](#) available on our website.

Requests are not guarantees. Requests will be filled in the order in which we received the request forms. If a request is made for BOTH a coach and another player, the coach request will be prioritized unless otherwise specified. Request should be made only by a player’s parent/guardian, please do not submit a request on behalf of someone else’s child. The Athletic Department reserves the right to roster players as needed for the best interest of the league.

We will place players on teams once the registration window is closed. In the event that you do not turn in a Coach/Team Request Form, we will do our best to place your child on a team with other children at their school, if possible. Players on the waitlist will be placed as space is available and no requests are accepted for waitlist players.

Roster caps are established for each sport based on reasonable expectation of playing time and a coach/player ratio that ensures safety and player development opportunity. Any addition of players above the established cap number will be at the discretion of the Athletic Department.

## Picture Day

Every season, teams have the opportunity to participate in picture day at the Boys & Girls Clubs within the first half of the season. Coaches will schedule a time for the team to attend. Team and individual pictures are done by Radley Muller Photography. You may purchase pictures from the photography company on picture day if you desire. The B&GC gyms are closed for practices/games on picture days.

## Uniforms

Included in every player's registration fee is a Boys & Girls Club team shirt. The coach puts in a request for a team color and the shirts are given to the coach before picture day. Teams may be sponsored by a local business and have the business logo on the back of the shirt. The purchase and/or use of non-B&GC issued uniforms or jerseys is discouraged, as we seek to provide a feeling of equality between all teams.

## Equipment and Gear

Team sports equipment such as balls, flags, and cones are provided by the Athletic Department. Individual sports gear is the responsibility of each player. If you need assistance acquiring individual gear, please contact us. Below are the gear requirements for each sport we offer:

- Basketball: Court shoes (non-marking), athletic shorts or pants
- Baseball/Fastpitch: Baseball/softball or similar athletic pants (shorts OK for T-ball), baseball glove, cleats (no metal) strongly recommended above t-ball level.
- Volleyball: Court shoes (non-marking), knee pads recommended
- Flag Football: Cleats (no metal), athletic shorts or pants

## Safety

Please visit our Athletics website for the most up-to-date resources on child safety, including information on child abuse, concussions, hydration, and injury prevention.

### Abuse prevention

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Whatcom County mandates that staff and volunteers must use the 3+ rule with all children who are not their own. This means to never be alone with a child by making sure to have three or more people around at all times, such as a minimum of 2 adults and 1 player or 2 players and 1 adult.

Should you not be comfortable approaching a BGCWC staff with a concern, Boys & Girls Clubs of America have established a **24-hour child safety hotline (866-607-SAFE)** that can be used for confidential advice, guidance, and resources through a partnership with nationally recognized risk prevention and safety expert Praesidium.

### Injury prevention/treatment\*

- Dehydration/soreness: Drink plenty of water before, during, and after practices and games. Be sure to include stretching exercises in your practice and game routine.
- Cuts: Clean in cold water, dry, and apply dressing. If you are not First Aid certified, find a B&GC staff member who will assist you. Report all incidents to the B&GC Athletics staff.

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- Sprains & Strains: Use the RICE method - Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation. If you are not First Aid certified, find a B&GC staff member who will assist you. Never force a child to play with a sprain/strain. Report all incidents to the B&GC Athletics staff.
- Severe injuries: Dial 911 immediately. Notify the B&GC Athletics staff as soon as possible if a player is ever taken in for medical care or receives medical care. Report all incidents to the B&GC Athletics staff.

\*Boys & Girls Clubs Athletics staff are First Aid/CPR certified but are not medical professionals and cannot give medical opinions. These are basic recommendations.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Thank you for participating in our youth sports program with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Whatcom County. If you have any questions during the season, please contact us at [athletics@whatcomclubs.org](mailto:athletics@whatcomclubs.org) or (360) 527-9777 ext. 2.

Reminders from the B&GC:

- Stay positive
- These are kids
- This is a game
- Coaches are volunteers
- Officials are human
- No college scholarships will be handed out today
- Have fun and enjoy watching your child learn and grow!

# APPENDIX A: PRACTICE & GAME LOCATIONS



## PRACTICE AND GAME LOCATIONS

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Basketball</u></b></p> <p><b>Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club Gym - Bellingham</li> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club Gym - Ferndale</li> <li>• Local school gyms*</li> </ul> <p><b>Games</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club Gym - Bellingham</li> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club Gym - Ferndale</li> <li>• Host gyms in Whatcom County*</li> </ul> <p>*Varies each year</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Fastpitch/Baseball</u></b></p> <p><b>Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downer Fields - Bellingham</li> <li>• Geri Fields - Bellingham</li> <li>• Roosevelt Park - Bellingham</li> <li>• Pioneer Park - Ferndale</li> </ul> <p><b>Games</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northwest Fields "Phillips 66" - Bellingham</li> <li>• Roosevelt Park - Bellingham</li> <li>• Pioneer Park - Ferndale</li> <li>• ConocoPhillips Fields - Ferndale</li> <li>• Host fields in Whatcom County*</li> </ul> <p>*Varies each year</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Volleyball</u></b></p> <p><b>Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club Gym - Bellingham</li> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club Gym - Ferndale</li> </ul> <p><b>Games</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club Gym - Bellingham</li> <li>• Boys &amp; Girls Club Gym - Ferndale</li> <li>• Mount Baker Junior High (occasional)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Flag Football</u></b></p> <p><b>Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local parks and fields* - chosen by the coach</li> </ul> <p><b>Games</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roosevelt Park - Bellingham</li> <li>• Star Park - Ferndale</li> <li>• Host Fields*</li> </ul> <p>*Varies each year</p>

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# APPENDIX B: CODES OF CONDUCT



## PARENTS/SPECTATORS CODE OF CONDUCT

- 1) Parents/spectators will show respect to all coaches, players, officials, and staff and never act in a manner that would be disrespectful toward them.
- 2) Parents/spectators will avoid the use of profanity, inappropriate language, inappropriate topics, harassment, or violence toward other parents, players, coaches, officials, or staff.
- 3) Parents/spectators will not argue with coaches or officials and will always demonstrate good sportsmanship regardless of the score.
- 4) Parents/spectators will remember that the game is played for the youth and not for the adults.
- 5) Parents/spectators will do their best to get their child(ren) to games and practices on time and will notify the coach if they are unable to attend.
- 6) Parents/spectators will respect B&GC property and facilities and follow facility rules.
- 7) Alcohol, tobacco, vaping, and drugs are prohibited on Club property and at all B&GC events. Parents/spectators will refrain from the use of drugs, tobacco, or alcohol at all B&GC youth sports events.
- 8) Parents/spectators will report any safety concerns to their coach or B&GC staff.

**The above are examples and are not intended to be a comprehensive list. Violation of these and other similar actions could result in the suspension or dismissal from Boys & Girls Clubs activities.**



## PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT

- 1) Players will show respect to all game officials, coaches, teammates, opponents, parents, and staff and never act in a manner that would be disrespectful toward them.
- 2) Players will make every effort to be a positive member of their team.
- 3) Players will do their best to listen and learn from their coaches.
- 4) Players will honor the game, play fairly, and follow its rules and regulations.
- 5) Players will avoid the use of profanity, inappropriate language, inappropriate topics, harassment, or violence toward parents, players, coaches, officials, or staff.
- 6) Players will not argue with officials and will always demonstrate good sportsmanship regardless of the score.
- 7) Players will respect B&GC property and facilities and follow facility rules.
- 8) Alcohol, tobacco, vaping, and drugs are prohibited on Club property and at all B&GC events. Players will expect an environment free of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, and expect others to refrain from their use at all B&GC events.
- 9) Players will report any safety concerns to their coach or other trusted adult.

**The above are examples and are not intended to be a comprehensive list. Violation of these and other similar actions could result in the suspension or dismissal from Boys & Girls Clubs activities.**