



**GARDNER
COMMUNITY
YOUTH CENTER**

**MEMBER
HANDBOOK**

YOUTH CENTER CONTACT

YOUTH CENTER DIRECTOR

Brandon Hughey

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ADDRESS

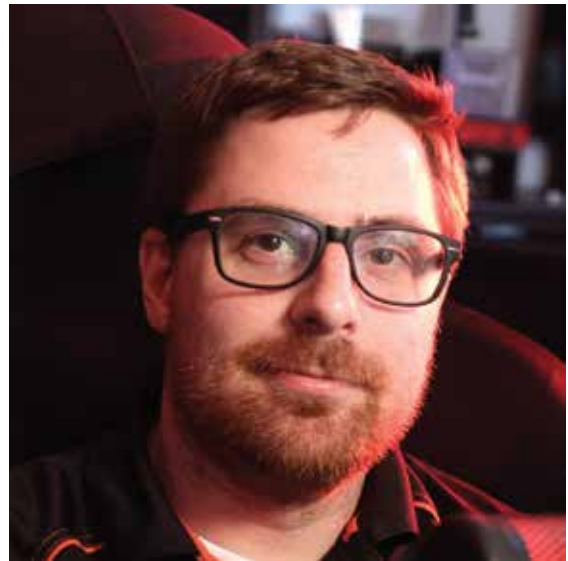
160 Elm Street, Gardner, MA 01440

MEMBER HOURS

Monday - Friday: 2pm - 6pm*

EARLY RELEASE MEMBER HOURS

Monday - Friday: 10am - 6pm*



* Not open on recognized school holidays or during school closures.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Brandon serves as the director of the Gardner Community Youth Center, coordinating programming with his team of youth professionals and volunteers to ensure the best possible experience for Gardner's children. He served as the site director for the Gardner Boys & Girls Club for two years prior to the establishment of the GCYC and during his time at the Boys & Girls Club, he tripled the club's membership. A passionate youth educator and community builder, Brandon previously worked as an elementary school teacher in the Gardner Public School system for 9 years. Whether it be sharing his passions and hobbies, planning fun events for children of all ages, or serving as a mentor for Gardner's youth, Brandon does it all with true passion and care for the development of adolescents into successful, independent, and empowered community members.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

A CULTURE OF RESPECT

The Gardner Community Youth Center is a place where all Gardner Public Schools students from 7th to 12th Grade should feel welcome regardless of their differences. It is an expectation that all members will show respect, understanding, and patience with one another as well as with staff and volunteers.

A CULTURE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Being a member at the Gardner Community Youth Center is a privilege. It is an expectation that our members will demonstrate responsibility in order to maintain the many privileges we experience on a daily basis. This includes but is not limited to: maintaining clean spaces, taking care of the equipment and tools, and following staff instructions.

A CULTURE OF SAFETY

Our first priority will always be our members' physical and emotional safety. It is an expectation that our members will take their own safety seriously and consider the safety of themselves and others in their decision-making.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A conflict can be defined as any disagreement between members or members and staff/volunteers. In the event of a conflict, first consider the impact and nature of the conflict. Members should feel safe making an attempt to compromise or resolve a conflict they are involved in. If attempts are made to resolve the conflict but the conflict persists or escalates, involve a staff and/or volunteer right away. Violence, as a solution to a conflict, will not be tolerated.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

SAFETY INFORMATION

The Gardner Community Youth Center has a commitment to the emotional and physical well-being of the students in our community.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

All staff and volunteers are first run through a CORI check and must also complete a state and national fingerprint criminal record check.

MANDATED REPORTING

All staff and volunteers are mandatory reporters. Mandated reporters must report any critical incident or safety concern to local authorities immediately.

SAFE BOUNDARIES

To ensure member safety, members are prohibited from having any form of contact with staff or volunteers outside of the youth center or youth center events.

SUPERVISION

Members are to remain under the supervision of a staff or volunteer at all times. Staff are not permitted to be one-on-one with any member. This may mean that certain areas of the Youth Center may be closed if it would create a one-on-one supervision situation.

EMERGENCY EXITING PROCEDURES

In case of an emergency, we have established a designated meeting area in front of the school. Routes to this meeting area can be found on evacuation maps located in each room close to nearest exit. All members are asked to leave all personal belongings behind while evacuating the building during an emergency or fire drill. Staff will account for members using a roster of all members signed in.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Members are expected to contribute to our culture of respect, responsibility and safety. It is our goal to coach members to help them make better choices that align with these values.

Any action by a member that is inconsistent with our values will be reported to the director and recorded on an incident report form.

Members who are involved in a major incident* or show a pattern of behaviors inconsistent with our values will face consequences that may result in lost privileges or even suspension from the program at the director's discretion.

BULLYING

Bullying is defined as any unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying will not be tolerated at the Gardner Community Youth Center. Please report any bullying suspicions to the Youth Center Director immediately for investigation and resolution.

HOLIDAYS AND CLOSURES

The Gardner Community Youth Center observes federal and state holidays as observed by Gardner Public Schools.

Gardner Public School calendars that include observed holidays and closures will be available at the reception desk. In the event of a Gardner Public Schools closure for any reason, the Youth Center will remain closed.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

All students must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise authorized in advance by the Youth Center Director.

A pattern of late pick-ups places additional strain on staff and resources and is disruptive to program operations. Repeated late pick-ups may result in suspension or termination of the student's membership at the discretion of the Youth Center Director.

Parents and guardians are expected to make timely arrangements for transportation. If an unavoidable delay occurs, please notify the Youth Center as soon as possible.

YOUTH CENTER POLICIES

MEDICATION

Under staff supervision, our Youth Center will permit members to self-administer an approved prescription and/or over-the-counter medications with parent permission. For safety, all medications are kept in a secure locked location. Members are not permitted to bring medicine to the Youth Center, take medicine without supervision or give to another member.

ILLNESS

Ill and/or contagious children are prohibited from attending the Gardner Community Youth Center. This includes if they did not attend school due to illness. A member must be symptom free for 24 hours prior to returning to the Youth Center and a written release from a medical provider may be required before the member is permitted to return at the director's discretion.

If a member becomes ill while at the Youth Center parents/guardians must arrange to have the ill member picked up immediately upon notification.

If a member did not attend or was sent home early from school due to illness, they may not attend the Youth Center.

MEALS AND FOOD

A snack is provided daily to participants for no additional fee. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Outside food is permitted. All food and drinks must be consumed in designated areas.

Our Youth Center is a nut-free facility. Food from home that may contain nuts is prohibited. Members who possess prohibited food items may be asked to dispose of the food immediately. Options will be provided to members asked to dispose of food this way.

DRESS CODE

For the safety of your child, members are expected to wear appropriate clothing and footwear for Youth Center activities. Clothing shall not advertise, promote or picture alcoholic beverages, tobacco, illegal drugs, nudity, discrimination or violence. Clothing may not display lewd, vulgar, obscene, or offensive language or symbols.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

The Youth Center is not responsible for lost, damaged, missing or stolen items on the premises. Personal belongings should be kept at home. Backpacks may be placed in cubbies for safe keeping. Check lost and found often, as unclaimed items are donated regularly. Youth Center Staff are not authorized to hold personal belongings or funds at the front desk or otherwise.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The Gardner Community Youth Center maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy regarding the use, possession, or distribution of tobacco products, vaping devices, alcohol, illegal drugs, or any other prohibited substances by minors. This includes, but is not limited to, smoking, vaping, or the consumption of any illegal or age-restricted substances, whether on Youth Center property, during Youth Center programs, or at any event sponsored by the Youth Center.

Any member found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include immediate suspension or termination of membership at the discretion of the Youth Center Director.

The safety, health, and well-being of all members is our highest priority. This policy is in place to ensure a safe, supportive, and lawful environment for all youth participants.

WEAPONS AND PROHIBITED ITEMS

The Gardner Community Youth Center strictly prohibits the possession, use, or distribution of any weapon or dangerous item by members, guests, or visitors. This includes, but is not limited to, firearms, knives, explosives, martial arts weapons, and any other object that could be used to threaten, intimidate, or cause harm. Toy weapons, replicas, or look-alike items are also prohibited.

This policy applies to all Youth Center property, during Youth Center programs, and at any event sponsored by the Youth Center.

Any member found in possession of a weapon or prohibited item will be subject to immediate suspension or termination of membership at the discretion of the Youth Center Director, and law enforcement may be contacted if necessary.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Before a member will be allowed to use Youth Center technology equipment or their personal device, both the member and their parent/guardian will need to read and sign the Technology Acceptable Use policy. Under the Technology Acceptable Use policy, the following relevant principles shall apply:

Youth Center devices shall include any and all Youth Center-owned existing and/or emerging technologies and devices that can take photographs, play, and record audio or video, input text, upload and download content and/or media and transmit or receive messages or images.

Personally owned devices shall include any and all member-owned existing and/or emerging technologies and devices that can take photographs, play and record audio or video, input text, upload and download content and/or media and transmit or receive messages or images.

Youth Center purposes shall include program activities, career development, communication with experts and/or Youth Center peer members, homework, and Youth Center activities. Members are expected to act responsibly and thoughtfully when using technology resources. Members bear the burden of responsibility to inquire with staff when they are unsure of the permissibility of a particular use of technology prior to engaging in its use.

Authorized use: Youth Center devices and personally owned devices are permitted for use during approved times for age-appropriate purposes and in approved locations only.

Appropriate use: Members may not use any technology to harass, threaten, demean, humiliate, intimidate, embarrass, or annoy their peers or others in their community. Any inappropriate use of a Youth Center or personally owned device, as determined by Youth Center staff, can lead to disciplinary action including but not limited to immediate suspension from the Youth Center, termination of membership or other disciplinary actions determined to be appropriate to the Youth Center's existing disciplinary policies including, if applicable, referral to local law enforcement.

Loss and damage: Members are responsible for keeping devices with them at all times. Staff are not responsible for the security and condition of the member's personal device. Furthermore, the Youth Center is not liable for the loss, damage, misuse, or theft of any personally owned device brought to the Youth Center.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Gardner Community Youth Center welcomes volunteers whose time and talents support our mission and programs. All volunteers must complete the following requirements before beginning service:

- **Volunteer Orientation:** All volunteers are required to attend a Volunteer Orientation to review program policies, safety procedures, and expectations.
- **Background Checks:** Volunteers must have a current CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) check on file with the Gardner Public Schools.

Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Youth Center policies and to serve as positive role models for our members. Failure to follow Youth Center policies or meet behavioral expectations may result in termination of volunteer service at the discretion of the Youth Center Director.

For more information on volunteering at our club, contact the Youth Center Director.