

The Buddy Program, Inc.
Guidelines, Policies & Procedures
Updated November, 2009

#1 Policy: General Child Safety

A primary commitment of the Buddy Program Inc. serving the children of Colorado is to protect their safety. This includes physical, sexual and emotional safety at all levels. To this end, the following are in place:

- Standard procedures of program delivery in written program delivery handbooks incorporating The Buddy Program Inc.'s Policies and Procedures reflecting the highest standard of service delivery.
- Ongoing notes of issues relating to child safety in supervision of the match.
- Orientations and/or training adapted to each of the parties: staff, parent/guardian, child, volunteer.
- A standardized process for crisis management.

Any allegation or incident where abuse or otherwise concerning conduct involving a child is in question shall be referred to the Case Manager.

Application: Community, School-based, P2P

#2 Policy: Background Checks and Screening of Volunteers

All volunteers as part of the application process will complete the screening established for the respective programs as detailed in the program manual.

With respect to 2 national and 2 state background checks, including a FBI fingerprint screening:

- An applicant with a violent crime or crime against a child will not be accepted.
- An applicant/volunteer with a felony conviction will receive additional assessment.
- An applicant with pending charges in the above stated categories will not be considered until acquitted of such charges.

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- Applicants/volunteers with a misdemeanor conviction will receive further assessment.
- Applicants with pending misdemeanor charge will not be considered until the applicant produces case disposition.
- Applicants must complete the screening process and paperwork and be deemed an appropriate candidate before being accepted as a volunteer: application, releases, interview, 3 letters of reference, 3 phone references, any other reference deemed necessary, background checks (as stated above) and volunteer training.
- If an applicant discloses past physical, sexual, emotional abuse or thoughts of harming themselves or others to Buddy Program staff, staff will be required to disclose that information following organizational procedures, in compliance with Colorado State Statutes governing the reporting of abuse and neglect.
- Applicant's misrepresentation of personal information or history could result in termination or non-acceptance in The Buddy Program.
- The Buddy Program accepts or declines volunteers based on the information gathered and for reasons of confidentiality will not share this information or reasons of denial with any applicant.

Application: Community, School-based

#3 Policy: Driving Records and Insurance

- The agency will review an applicant's current driving record. If an applicant has lived outside of Colorado, records from the previous state(s) will be obtained. Subsequently, current driving records will be obtained on each volunteer at the volunteer's annual anniversary.
- Volunteers are required to carry auto limits of \$100,000/\$300,000 = bodily injury each person/each accident in order to be covered by The Buddy Program's liability insurance in the event of an accident.
- Applicants and current Big Buddies with a DUI/DWAI, license revocation or license suspension in the last year, dating from the date of conviction, will either be screened out, or not allowed to transport a child. After terms and

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conditions of probation have been successfully completed, the Buddy Program Inc. will reassess suitability.

- Applicants and current Big Buddies with a DUI/DWAI, license revocation or license suspension over one year will receive additional assessment.
- It is the volunteer's obligation to inform Buddy Program staff of any infraction that occurs after being matched with a Little Buddy. Situations will be assessed on a case by case basis by Director of Youth and Family Services.
- Youth must wear a seatbelt when being transported by the volunteer.
- Youth under the age of 6 or less than 55 inches tall (4"6) must be restrained in a child booster seat. If a child exceeds these limits in age or height, the child must be restrained by a safety belt. All volunteers will follow the State of Colorado's Child Passenger Safety law as outline in the Volunteer Training manual.
- All volunteers will provide certification of current auto insurance annually on their anniversary date.

Application: Community

#4 Policy: Home Assessments

- Home assessments will be conducted during the screening process to enhance the safety of a child when in a volunteer's home.

Application: Community

#5 Policy: Alcohol and Drug Use

- Current use of an illicit drug or abuse of alcohol may be grounds for not accepting an applicant after further assessment has been conducted.
- Use of a controlled substance will require further assessment.
- Volunteers will not consume alcoholic beverages prior to or during match activities/interactions. Failure to comply will result in termination from the Buddy Program.

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#6 Policy: Firearms

- No volunteer will have a firearm in the presence or available to a Little Buddy.
- If a volunteer has firearms in the home, they must be safely stored in a locked cabinet and not accessible by the Little Buddy.

Application: Community, School-based

#7 Policy: Health

- Any applicant presenting a physical or mental health condition or situation which may have a bearing on the volunteer experience will be asked to sign a release of information form so that a full understanding of the condition or situation can be explored.

Application: Community, School-based, P2P

#8 Policy: Applicants with a History of Alcohol/Drug dependence/abuse

- Volunteers with less than 2 years of sobriety and/or abstinence will be screened out.
- Any Volunteer who is actively practicing sobriety or abstinence will be asked to sign a release of information form so that a full understanding of the disease can be explored.

Application: Community, School-based, P2P

#9 Policy: Life Transition

- Any volunteer or applicant, who is facing any major life change, will be given further assessment. Major life changes may include but are not limited to: recent death of a loved one, illness, pregnancy, and divorce.

Application: Community, School-based, P2P

#10 Policy: Child Safety Orientation

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- Staff training will be completed by a Program Coordinator within the first two weeks of employment.

Application: All Program Staff

- Child safety issues will be monitored through supervision and case notes.

Application: All Program Staff

- Family and child interviews will be completed and both Big and Little Buddy files will be complete before a match is made. Files will be audited yearly to ensure staff compliance with this policy.

Application: Community, School based

- Volunteer orientation will be completed prior to the match introduction during the application phase. All applicant documentation must be completed prior to the match introduction, this includes: receipt of all background checks, phone and letters of reference, auto insurance documentation and participation in a confidential interview facilitated by a Buddy Program case manager.
- Applicant's confidential files must be complete prior to a matching a Buddy pair.

Application: All Staff, Community, School-based, P2P

#11 Policy: Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Orientation

- Staff training will be completed within the first two weeks of employment.
- Volunteer orientation will be completed prior to the match introduction during the application phase.

Application: All Staff, Community, School-based, P2P

#12 Policy: Abuse and Neglect Allegations

- All staff and volunteers who have knowledge of any situation with a potential or actual threat to a child's safety will be required to disclose that

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information following organizational procedures, in compliance with
Colorado State Statutes governing the reporting of child abuse and neglect.

- Volunteers will speak with their Case Manager who will then follow the procedures set forth in the Volunteer Training and Policies & Procedures Manual.

Application: All Staff, Community, School-based, P2P

#13 Policy: Threats to Harm Self or Others

- All staff and volunteers who have knowledge of any situation or reasonable cause to believe that a Little Buddy, Applicant/Volunteer or parent is in such mental or emotional condition as to be dangerous to himself or to the person or property of another and that disclosure of the communication is necessary to prevent the threatened danger. All staff will be required to follow organization procedures set forth in the Volunteer Training and Policies & Procedures manual.
- Staff with knowledge of said situation will be in contact with the Director of Youth and Family Services.
- Depending on the nature of the information disclosed, local law enforcement and/or Human Services will be contacted.

Application: All Staff, Community, School-based, P2P

#14 Policy: Re-match and Annual Review

- If a volunteer moves from one program to another the corresponding application process must be completed. The volunteer will then attend the appropriate training.
- At the annual anniversary of the match, a review may be completed as prescribed by each program.

Application: Community, School-based, P2P

#15 Policy: Overnight Visits

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- The Buddy Program does not allow overnight visits, unless the activity is supervised by the Buddy Program.
- If a pair chooses to participate in a Buddy Program sponsored group overnight activity, special parent permission will be required.

Application: Community, School-based, P2P

#16 Policy: Match Support

- The Case Manager shall adhere to a monthly contact schedule with Big Buddies and the family of Little Buddies.
- If contact is initiated by a Case Manager and follow-through is not completed within 8 weeks or 3 attempts to contact the Big Buddy and the Little Buddy/family, the pair will be given further assessment.

Application: Community, School-based, P2P

#17 Policy: Confidentiality

- All information that a volunteer or parent/guardian may encounter about any child, child's family, Big Buddy/Little Buddy, the Big Buddy's/Little Buddy's family or anything else of a confidential nature about any child or volunteer in any way connected with the Buddy Program Inc. WILL BE HELD CONFIDENTIAL within the Buddy Program Inc.
- Any information that reveals or tends to reveal the identity of any person who is the subject of the record WILL BE HELD CONFIDENTIAL.
- The identity of any person who contributes information to the subject WILL BE HELD CONFIDENTIAL. The results of any inquiry into school records or medical records of any description WILL BE HELD CONFIDENTIAL within the Buddy Program Inc.
- Volunteers and parents/guardian will NOT discuss any privileged or confidential information that they receive with any other person without the prior verbal or written permission of the Case Manager.

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- Volunteer and parents/guardians will only release prior approved information to the individual to whom they have been given permission to release the information.
- Volunteer and parents/guardians agree to hold all related information confidential and, except as they may be legally required, will NOT disclose or release it to any individual or corporation at any time.
- Volunteer and parents/guardians understand that the Buddy Program, Inc. agrees to hold all related information confidential and, except as may be legally required will NOT disclose or release it to any individual or corporation at anytime.

Application: Community, School-based, P2P

#18 Policy: Counseling Policy

- The Buddy Program Inc. has a diverse list of therapeutic resources available to Little Buddies who are expressing a desire for additional services. It is the policy of the program to offer the first four sessions free of charge to the Little Buddy. All subsequent sessions, the Buddy Program would like to encourage family participation with a minimum of \$10.00 per session. If funds become a concern for the family, the Buddy Program Inc. will work with the client's therapist to ensure continuity of care for the individual and their family.

Application: Community, School-based, P2P

#19 Policy: Volunteer Dispute Resolution

- When a person has a concern or there is a dispute or disagreement regarding any activity in any way related to the Buddy Program Inc., the parties are expected to first attempt to resolve the situation with the assigned Case Manager. If such discussion is not sufficient, then the Program Director shall be contacted. If necessary, the process (as defined in Policy #20), with the involvement of the Executive Director.

Application: Community, School-based, P2P

#20 Policy: Dispute Resolution Procedure

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- The Buddy Program Inc. utilizes progressive dispute resolution procedures to increase a volunteer's awareness of areas of deficiency related to policy violations and to assist them in taking appropriate action to improve their interactions with the Little Buddy and family. The Buddy Program Inc. additionally wishes to provide a receptive forum for all persons involved with the Buddy Program Inc. to address conflicts, misunderstandings and disputes.

Dispute resolution shall involve three steps under the guidance of the assigned Case Manager, as follows:

1. A meeting (or telephone conference) with identification and discussion of the issues or misunderstanding, and a verbal or written resolution agreement;
2. If required, a follow-up meeting to review the agreement reached in step #1 above, and written documentation of the resolution and when applicable the timetable for implementation;
3. Volunteers or Big Buddies, may be placed on Probationary Status with written conditions or terminated at the sole discretion of the Program Director.

If necessary, the process may continue with the involvement of the Executive Director.

Application: Community, School-based, P2P

#22 Policy: Site-Based Programs

The Buddy Program Inc. along with The Aspen and Basalt school's primary commitment of serving the children of the Roaring Fork Valley, is to protect their safety. To this end, the following are in place:

- Volunteers who are involved in the School-based and Peer to Peer programs will spend time with their Little Buddy at the respective school campus and are asked not to have contact outside of school.
- Volunteers are asked to limit gift-giving. Please check with your Buddy Program Case Manager prior to giving gifts for special occasions such as birthdays.
- Volunteers are asked to follow proper cancellation procedures as addressed in the training if they cannot make it for their scheduled meeting with their Little Buddy.

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- Volunteers will sign-in and wear a name tag when arriving at the Little Buddy's school. They will sign-out and return the name tag when they leave. Volunteers in the **Aspen** School-based program will sign-out their Little Buddy in the appropriate book when leaving school property to have lunch at the high school or to utilize the Aspen Recreation Center or Aspen Youth Center.
- All volunteers will report any **suspected** child abuse or neglect, self harm or thoughts of harming others to the Little Buddy's school counselor and their Buddy Program Case Manager.
- Parent permission must be obtained if a Community based Big Buddy meets their Little Buddy on school grounds.

Application: Aspen/Basalt School-based, Aspen/Basalt Peer to Peer, Community

The Case Manager has the absolute right to immediately close any relationship for cause, including cases of serious misconduct and illegal activity. Cause includes, but is not limited to: charge or conviction of a felony, any legal charge involving intoxication or substance abuse, or any conduct not in compliance with The Buddy Program Inc. Policies and Procedures. The Buddy Program Inc. reserves the right to remove any volunteer from the Buddy Program Inc. at anytime.

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