

# **The Buddy Program**

## **Policies & Guidelines**

### **Updated June 2023**

#### **These Policies and Guidelines amend, restate and replace in their entirety all prior versions of the Policies and Guidelines for the Buddy Program**

The following Policies and Guidelines exist to promote safety of the youth participants and adults in our programs. Any failure to comply with these Policies could result in dismissal from the program.

The Buddy Program does not discriminate nor tolerate bullying on the basis of race, color, religion, political conviction, national origin, citizenship, gender, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, military status, age, sexual orientation, income level, immigration status or disability. The Buddy Program actively strives to identify and eliminate discrimination by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices and attitudes, so that access to programming is inclusive and power is shared equitably.

This document is periodically updated, and updated versions can be found on-line at [www.buddyprogram.org](http://www.buddyprogram.org) and a copy can be obtained at any point by calling our office- 970-920-2130. All staff will be required to follow organization procedures set forth in the Staff Training Manual.

#### **Mission, Vision, Values, and Our Commitment to Social Justice, Diversity, and Inclusion**

At the Buddy Program, our mission is to empower youth through mentoring experiences to achieve their full potential. We envision a thriving community in which *all* members are supported and connected through meaningful relationships and experiences to achieve success. We value kindness, connection, discovery, empowerment, and inclusion.

We recognize that many members of our community, especially those that identify as black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC), may not have equitable access to employment, a living wage, housing, healthcare, education, and may experience discrepancies within the criminal justice system. These barriers and disparate conditions result in a lack of equity that serves as an impediment to many youth achieving their full potential.

Social justice extends beyond attitudes and into actions that we take to promote a safe, accessible, and honoring space for all individuals to thrive. We recognize our responsibility to, and leadership within, our community through the following commitments:

- Consciously cultivating an inclusive and welcoming climate and organizational culture among staff, board members, volunteers, participants and donors that embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people

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- Creating and maintaining programming free from discrimination
- Continued, sustainable growth and allocation of resources as an organization that addresses the complexities and needs of the diverse communities we serve
- Movement beyond tolerance and toward active inclusion, affirmation, and the celebration of our differences
- Ongoing self-examination of our attitudes, formal and informal policies and practices, assumptions and judgments, and assessment of our privilege with the end goal of acting in alliance with BIPOC and other marginalized community members

#### Definitions:

The following terms are utilized in this document and are defined as:

**Policy/Policies:** Directive(s) authorized by the Buddy Program. Policies must be followed.

**Guideline:** Considerations and recommendations. Individuals are not mandated to follow guidelines, but they provide sound ideas and practices to consider.

**Community Program:** An adult volunteer Mentor paired with a youth Mentee ages 6 to 18. Meet one-on-one in the community for activities as determined by the pair.

**School-based Program:** An adult volunteer Mentor paired with a youth Mentee ages 6 to 18. Meet one-on-one at the Mentee's school during the school year.

**Peer-to-Peer Program:** A high school volunteer Mentor paired with a middle school or elementary school youth Mentee. Meet weekly one-on-one in a group setting supervised by TBP staff during the school year.

**LEAD Program:** Leadership through Exploration, Action, and Discovery. A group, experiential mentoring program for teens in grades 6-12 that builds life skills through the lens of backcountry travel and hands-on experiences. Includes Outdoor Leadership, Youth Camp, Dream Day Camp, and Monthly Activities.

**Big Buddy:** An adult or high school volunteer Mentor who is matched with one youth Mentee in the Community, School-based, or Peer-to-Peer programs. Big Buddies are included as Volunteers throughout this document.

**LEAD Counselor/Trip Leader:** An adult volunteer or temporary paid employee functioning in an official leadership capacity during LEAD Programs. Unpaid LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders are included as Volunteers throughout this document.

**Little Buddy:** A youth Mentee who is matched with one adult or high school Mentor in the Community, School-based, or Peer-to-Peer programs.

**Parent/Guardian:** A person who has the legal authority to care for the personal and property interests of a youth.

**Applicant:** An individual who has applied to be any or all of the following: a Big Buddy, a Board Member, a Leadership Development Board Member, a LEAD Counselor/Trip Leader.

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**Staff:** A year-round, paid employee of the Buddy Program. Includes but is not limited to Mentoring Program Coordinators and LEAD Program Coordinators.

**Board of Directors:** Individuals who manage the affairs of the Buddy Program. Directors need not be residents of the State of Colorado but shall be at least 18 years old. Board members are included as Volunteers throughout this document.

**Leadership Development Board:** Individuals who are committed to raising awareness among the younger generation (21-40) of Roaring Fork Valley leaders about the Buddy Program. Leadership Development Board members are included as Volunteers throughout this document.

**Volunteer:** An unpaid individual serving in an official capacity within a program of the Buddy Program. Volunteers include Big Buddies, Board Members, Leadership Development Board Members, and unpaid LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders.

**Youth Participant:** A youth enrolled in any program of the Buddy Program.

**Buddy Pair:** A Big and Little Buddy who are formally paired within the Community Program, School-based Program, or Peer-to-Peer Program.

**#1 Policy: General Youth Participant Safety**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer, LEAD**

**Individuals: Staff, Volunteers, Applicants, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders**

A primary commitment of the Buddy Program, Inc. (“Buddy Program”) is to promote the safety of youth participants in its programs. This includes physical, sexual and emotional well-being at all levels. To this end, the following are in place:

- a. Standard procedures of program delivery in written program delivery handbooks incorporating the Buddy Program’s Guidelines and Policies and reflecting the highest standard of service delivery.
- b. Ongoing notes of issues relating to youth participant well-being in the supervision of the Buddy Pair and/or youth participation in any program.
- c. Bullying of any kind, including cyber-bullying, will not be tolerated.
- d. Orientations and/or training adapted to each of these parties: Staff, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders, Parent/Guardian, Youth Participant, Volunteer.
- e. All Buddy Program staff are mandated reporters. Mandated reporter training will be completed by all Buddy Program staff within the first two weeks of employment. A mandated reporter is a person who, because of his or her profession, is legally required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the relevant authorities.

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- f. A standardized process for crisis management.
- g. The Buddy Program has the right to immediately terminate our relationship with any individual with or without cause and to investigate cases of serious misconduct and illegal activity.

Regarding allegations of child abuse, neglect, and/or harm to self or others:

- a. All staff who have knowledge of any situation with a potential or actual threat to a child or youth participant will be required to disclose that information following organizational procedures, in compliance with Colorado State Statutes governing the reporting of child abuse and/or neglect and/or harm to self or others. Depending on the nature of the information disclosed, local law enforcement and/or County Department of Human Services will be contacted.
- b. Big Buddies and LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders who have knowledge of child abuse and/or neglect and/or harm to self or others will speak with their Mentoring Program Coordinator or LEAD Program Coordinator.
- c. Additionally, individuals who have knowledge of any situation or reasonable cause to believe that a Little Buddy, Applicant, Big Buddy, LEAD Counselor/Trip Leader or parent is in such mental or emotional condition as to be dangerous to himself or to the person or property of another will disclose and communicate the necessary information to their Program Coordinator, or supervisor to prevent the threatened danger.

**#2 Policy: Confidentiality**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer, LEAD**

**Individuals: Staff, Volunteers, Applicants, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders**

Youth participant, parent/guardian, applicant, and volunteer information will be treated by the Buddy Program as confidential and will not be disclosed or released to any individual or agency at any time, as follows:

- a. Direct and identifying information encountered about any youth participant, youth participant's family, volunteer, volunteer's family, or anything else of a confidential nature about any youth or volunteer in any way connected with the Buddy Program will be held confidential within the Buddy Program.
- b. The identity of any person who contributes sensitive information to the Buddy Program will be held confidential.

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- c. Any school records or medical records provided to the Buddy Program will remain confidential within the Buddy Program
- d. Buddy Program staff, volunteers and parents/guardians will not discuss any privileged or confidential information that they receive with any other person without the prior verbal or written permission of the Buddy Program.
- e. Buddy Program will only release prior approved information to the individual or agency to whom they have been given permission to release the information.
- f. All Buddy Program files, forms, and database are confidential property of the Buddy Program and will not be released, copied or shared with volunteers, parents/guardians, youth participants, outside agencies or corporations.

Exceptions to the above are:

- a. A health/safety issue or an incident that must be reported to law enforcement, a court of law, or County Department of Human Services.
- b. Information that youth participants, parent/guardians, and volunteers authorize to be shared for the purpose of program planning (for example, Big Buddy/Little Buddy matching) may include name, age, sex, gender identity, race, marital status, family composition, sexual orientation, living situation, area of residence and workplace, religious and/or spiritual beliefs, interests, and hobbies.
- c. Individuals may request of the Buddy Program that any specific individual information listed as an exception above in bullet b. be maintained as confidential.
- d. Confidential information may be shared between staff members of the Buddy Program.

### **#3 Policy: Background Checks and Screening**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, LEAD**

**Individuals: Staff, Volunteers, Applicants, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders**

All Applicants as part of the application process will complete the screening established for the respective programs as detailed in the Staff Training Manual.

In addition to Applicants being screened for the following, current Big Buddies, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders are asked to follow these policies as part of the on-going screening process.

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With respect to all background checks:

- a. An Applicant with a violent crime or crime against a child will not be accepted.
- b. An Applicant with a felony conviction or a misdemeanor conviction will receive additional assessment.

During the intake process and while active in the program, individuals (Applicants, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders, Staff, Volunteers) will be asked to disclose pending investigations and/or charges:

- c. An individual who is the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation will not be accepted and/or may be placed on hold with regard to their involvement with the Buddy Program until the outcome of the investigation is known at which time a decision will be made as to their status in the program.
- d. An individual with pending charges or a prior conviction of a crime against a child, sexual offense, or felony categories will not be accepted and their involvement with the Buddy Program will be terminated until acquitted of such charges. An individual with pending charges or a prior conviction of a violent crime will be further assessed and may not be accepted and their involvement with the Buddy Program may be terminated until acquitted of such charges.
- e. Applicants must complete the screening process and paperwork and be deemed an appropriate candidate before being accepted as a staff member, LEAD Counselor/Trip Leader, or a volunteer.
- f. If an individual discloses past or current physical, sexual, emotional abuse or thoughts of harming themselves or others to the Buddy Program staff, staff are required to disclose that information following organizational procedures, and in compliance with Colorado State Statutes governing the reporting of abuse and neglect. Their participation in the Buddy Program may be further assessed.
- g. If an individual discloses that they have contact with a registered sex offender or someone with a prior conviction of a sexual offense in the community, the Buddy Program requires that they will not initiate contact between Buddy Program youth participants and that offender at any time. The Buddy Program will give further assessment to the individual's involvement with the Buddy Program.
- h. An individual's misrepresentation or neglect to inform the Buddy Program of personal information or history could result in termination or non-acceptance in the Buddy Program.

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- i. The Buddy Program accepts or declines Applicants based on the information gathered and for reasons of confidentiality will not share this information or reasons of denial with any Applicant.
- j. There may be instances where a potential volunteer applies to become a Big Buddy within the Buddy Program during a difficult life transition; in which case the applicant may be given further assessment and/or asked to apply again at a later time. While active in the program Big Buddies are asked to notify the Buddy Program of any new life changing events. Major life changes may include but are not limited to recent death of a loved one, marriage, illness, pregnancy, adoption of a child, and divorce.
- k. The Buddy Program will not accept an Applicant that has been previously rejected by The Buddy Program.
- l. National and State background checks are performed annually. Board and Leadership Development Board members have a background check done when they join the board and at the time of renewing their term. Furthermore, the Buddy Program reserves the right to administer background checks for any individual at any time during their involvement with the Buddy Program. Failure to comply with these background checks may result in suspension or termination of an individual's status with the Buddy Program.
- m. It may be determined that additional information sources are needed in order to make an assessment of an Applicant's appropriateness as a volunteer. Such sources might include but are not limited to psychological counselors, therapists, medical doctors, probation officers, religious clergy, community members, and previous employers or supervisors in previous volunteer experience. If the Volunteer Applicant has been involved with another child-serving agency in the past, a recommendation from that agency may be requested.
- n. Buddy Program reserves the right to reject an Applicant with or without cause in its sole and absolute discretion.

#### **#4 Policy: Home Assessments and Home Visits**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community**

**Individuals: Big Buddies, Big Buddy Applicants**

- a. Home assessments on Big Buddy Applicants may be conducted during the screening process. These assessments may also happen at any point during the Applicant's Big Buddy tenure.

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- b. The Buddy Program does not allow a Little Buddy to spend time in the Big Buddy's home until the Buddy Pair has been matched for six months, the Mentoring Program Coordinator has given final approval for the home visits and a waiver and release has been signed by the Little Buddy's parent.
- c. Guideline: The Buddy Program highly recommends parents to visit the homes of their children's Big Buddies, especially in the case that their children spend time in the homes of their Big Buddies.

#### **#5 Policy: Site-Based Programs**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer**

**Individuals: Big Buddies**

- a. 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. Site-based volunteers will assume all liability should they wish to see their Little Buddy during the summer or outside of school meeting time as meetings should only take place on school grounds, within the confines of the school day and school year.
- b. The only exception to policy #5a, is for School-based pairs who have completed and filed a parent permission slip with the Buddy Program allowing the pair to leave the school grounds for lunch.
- c. Volunteers must follow proper cancellation procedures as addressed in New Mentor Training if they cannot make it for their scheduled meeting with their Little Buddy.
- d. Volunteers who see their Little Buddy at the school, must follow all school rules and regulations when on campus.

#### **#6 Policy: Driving Records, Insurance, and Transporting Youth Participants**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, LEAD**

**Individuals: Staff, Big Buddies, Big Buddy Applicants, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders**

- a. The Buddy Program reviews an Applicant's driving record to determine the suitability for transporting youth.
- b. Staff or volunteers transporting youth participants in a private vehicle are required to carry auto insurance with minimum limits of \$100,000/\$300,000 for bodily injury for each person/each accident in order to be covered by the Buddy Program's liability insurance in the event of an accident.
- c. Volunteers may be asked to provide certification of current auto insurance annually.



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- d. Applicants with a DUI/DWAI, license revocation or license suspension in the last three years, will be further assessed to determine the suitability for transporting youth participants.
- e. Current Big Buddies, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders who receive a DUI/DWAI, license revocation and license suspension will receive further assessment for suitability of transporting youth participants.
- f. It is the volunteer, LEAD Counselor/Trip Leader, or staff member's obligation to inform the Buddy Program of any infraction that occurs. Situations will be assessed on a case by case basis by Buddy Program staff.
- g. Youth participants must wear a seatbelt when being transported by a volunteer, LEAD Counselor/Trip Leader, or staff member.
- h. While transporting Buddy Program youth participants, volunteers, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders, and staff members will abide by all Colorado driving laws. It is the responsibility of the driver to be informed of such driving laws.

**#7 Policy: Alcohol and Drug Use**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer, LEAD**

**Individuals: Staff, Volunteers, Applicants, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders**

- a. Current use or abuse of an illegal or controlled substance such as alcohol, marijuana, or prescription drugs may be grounds for not accepting an Applicant until further assessment has been conducted.
- b. Staff, volunteers and LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders will not consume or be under the influence of controlled substances, including but not limited to alcohol, marijuana, or prescription drugs while with their Little Buddy or youth participants. Failure to comply will result in termination from the Buddy Program.
- c. Big Buddy Applicants with a history of abuse of alcohol and/or drugs must have at least two years of sobriety and/or abstinence from alcohol and/or drugs to be accepted. The Buddy Program may ask for a release to speak with the Applicant's sponsor.

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**#8 Policy: Health & Mental Health**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer, LEAD**

**Individuals: Staff, Big Buddies, Applicants, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders**

- a. Applicants must demonstrate stable, emotional health to the satisfaction of the Buddy Program.

Additionally, specific to Big Buddy Applicants:

- b. Any Big Buddy Applicant presenting a physical or mental health condition or situation which may have a bearing on the volunteer experience may be asked to sign a release of information form so that a full understanding of the condition or situation can be assessed.
- c. Any Big Buddy Applicant who has been hospitalized or reported past mental health issues such as, but not limited to, depression, obsessive compulsive or substance abuse disorders, or suicidal behaviors, must demonstrate stable emotional adjustment. An additional reference from a counselor, primary treatment provider, or other credible source of information in regard to the status of the Applicant's mental health may be required.
- d. If a Big Buddy Applicant is currently in psychotherapy or intensive counseling or has been involved in such within the past five years, a release of information from the therapist or counselor may be requested.

**#9 Policy: Firearms and Weapons**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer, LEAD**

**Individuals: Staff, Volunteers, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders, Youth Participants**

- a. No individual will have a firearm in the presence of or available to Buddy Program youth participants. If an individual has firearms and/or ammunition in the home, automobile, or any place they take a youth participant, unloaded firearms must be stored locked in a cabinet, safe, gun vault, or storage case that is inaccessible to youth participants. Ammunition must be stored in a locked location separate from firearms and also inaccessible to youth participants.
- b. Any youth participant involved with our programs is prohibited from bringing weapons (defined as any instrument that can harm themselves or others) to any Buddy Program sponsored activities or events.

**#10 Training and Match Process**

**Policy applies to:**

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**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer**

**Individuals: Big Buddies, Parents/Guardians, Youth Participants**

- a. Big Buddy training will be completed during the application phase and prior to being accepted in the program specific to the Community and School-based programs.
- b. Parents of Little Buddies in the Community Program are required to complete a Parent Training (online or handout) after a Mentoring Program Coordinator has completed the family intake and before the Little Buddy is matched.
- c. The Buddy Program most often matches youth participants with Big Buddies of the same gender, though considers parent/guardian, youth, and mentor preferences related to sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.
- d. Big Buddies are asked to commit to seeing their Little Buddy 3-4 times a month for one year in the Community Program and weekly throughout the school year for the School-based Program and Peer-to-Peer Program.
- e. The Buddy Program matches Big Buddies with Little Buddies based on mutual interests.
- f. Buddy Pair matches will not be made until an applicant has completed every step of the application, screening and training process.
- g. When a Big Buddy applicant comes to the Buddy Program with a designated Little Buddy in mind, the Buddy Program-after completing the screening process for the Big Buddy and the family intake for the Little Buddy- reserves the right to determine whether this match is appropriate or not.
- h. If an individual moves from one program to another within the Buddy Program, the corresponding application process must be completed. The Volunteer will then attend the appropriate training.

#### **#11 Policy: Buddy Pair Match Support**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based**

**Individuals: Mentoring Program Coordinators, Big Buddies, Little Buddies, Parents/Guardians**

- a. The Case Manager shall adhere to a monthly contact schedule with Big Buddies and Little Buddies. In the case of the Community and School-based programs, the Mentoring Program Coordinator will also adhere to a monthly or bi-monthly contact schedule with families of Little Buddies.

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- b. If contact with the Big Buddy or Little Buddy/family is initiated by a Mentoring Program Coordinator and follow-through is not completed within 8 weeks or 3 attempts by the Big Buddy and the Little Buddy/family, the pair will be given further assessment.

#### **#12 Policy: Activities**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community**

**Individuals: Big Buddies, Little Buddies, Parents/Guardians**

- a. In addition to Buddy Program sponsored activities, Buddy Pairs take part in a variety of activities on their own. The Buddy Program general liability policy may not cover hazardous activities such as paragliding, roped sports, water sports, motor sports, etc. (this is not an exhaustive list). Please check with your Mentoring Program Coordinator if you have questions.
- b. Buddy Pairs who wish to visit the shooting range or participate in hunting activities will require special parental permission to do so and are advised that activities involving firearms are not covered by the Buddy Program general liability insurance.
- c. If the Buddy Pair is participating in an activity that requires a Release of Liability waiver, it is the Mentor's responsibility to ensure the Parent/Guardian of the LB signs that waiver.
- d. All Buddy Pairs in the Community Program are required to attend at least one group activity sponsored by the Buddy Program during the year.
- e. New Buddy Pairs in the Community Program are required to attend at least three group activities sponsored by the Buddy Program during the first year.
- f. Activities require advance registration, and because cancellation can financially impact the Buddy Program and/or take away space from another Buddy Pair, cancellations must be due to emergency or health reasons.

#### **#13. Policy: Privacy/Respect of Personal Space**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer, LEAD**

**Individuals: Volunteers, Youth Participants, Staff, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders**

- a. Volunteers, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders, and staff shall respect youth participants' privacy and personal space at all times and be vigilant about establishing a comfortable atmosphere when interacting with youth participants.
  - i. Use of bathrooms – Volunteers, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders, and staff will provide youth participants with privacy and wait

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outside the bathroom stall or the bathroom door when youth participants use the bathroom in public places.

- II. Changing clothes— Volunteers, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders, and staff will provide youth participants with privacy and wait outside the bathroom or changing area when youth participants change clothes. Similarly, volunteers, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders, and staff should ensure privacy be maintained while they change clothes.

#### **#14 Policy. Overnight Visits**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer, LEAD**

**Individuals: Big Buddies, Youth Participants, Parents/Guardians**

- a. The Buddy Program does not allow overnight visits, unless the activity is supervised by the Buddy Program. If a Community Program pair decides to do an overnight activity, the Big Buddy, Little Buddy and his/her family assume all liability.
- b. If a youth participant or Buddy pair participates in a Buddy Program sponsored group overnight activity, enrollment paperwork and/or special parent permission will be required.

#### **#15 Policy: Youth Participant Intake and Enrollment**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer, LEAD**

**Individuals: Youth Participants, Parents/Guardians**

- a. Complete enrollment paperwork must be on file for a youth participant prior to their active participation with the Buddy Program.
- b. During the program intake and enrollment process, youth participants who have a background history of social-emotional or behavioral challenges (including but not limited to: substance abuse, legal charges or convictions, mental health challenges, etc.) may be further assessed by the Buddy Program staff prior to program enrollment.

#### **#16 Policy: Behavioral Expectations of Youth Participants:**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer, LEAD**

**Individuals: Big Buddies, Youth Participants, Parents/Guardians**

- a. Youth participants in the Buddy Program will receive a Code of Conduct prior to being involved in the program. Youth, their parents/guardians and their Big Buddies (if applicable) must sign the Code of Conduct prior to their participation.

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- b. If a youth participant doesn't adhere to the Code of Conduct, the Buddy Program reserves the right to take disciplinary action up to and including termination of youth's participation in the program.
- c. Throughout participation in the program, youth participants with emerging social-emotional or behavioral challenges (including but not limited to: substance abuse, legal charges or convictions, mental health challenges, etc.) may be further assessed by the Buddy Program staff prior to program continuation.

#### **#17 Policy: Counseling**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer, LEAD**

**Individuals: Youth Participants, Parents/Guardians**

- a. The Buddy Program may offer counseling services by referring family and youth participants to an outside therapist free of charge to youth and families who demonstrate a need for and interest in counseling.
- b. Prior to the youth participant or family receiving counseling services funded by the Buddy Program, the Buddy Program Counseling Agreement must be completed, including a release of confidential information between the Buddy Program and the counselor and a \$50 deposit.

#### **#18 Policy: Social Media/Networking**

**Policy applies to:**

**Programs: Community, School-based, Peer-to-Peer, LEAD**

**Individuals: Staff, Volunteers, LEAD Counselors/Trip Leaders, Parents/Guardians**

- a. To protect the confidentiality and privacy of all participants, we require adherence to the following:
  - What is acceptable to share:
    - i. First names;
    - ii. Reflections on past meetings and activities from your perspective; and
    - iii. Anything the individual you are posting about would be comfortable with other people reading. Ask for permission in order to ensure their buy-in and comfort with the process.
- b. What is not acceptable to share:
  - i. Anything that would in any way compromise the safety of a Buddy Program youth participant, such as but not limited to:
    - I. Confidential identifying information like last names, address, telephone number, which the youth participant attends;

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- II. Confidential information, including history of a Buddy Program youth participant's family, educational experiences, and any physical, mental, emotional health or economic issues;
  - III. Details about upcoming meetings, including Buddy Program activities.
    - ii. Information that would be hurtful or embarrassing
    - iii. Information that displays any illegal activity (i.e. under-age drinking, drug use, violence, etc.)
    - iv. Photographs and/or identifying information about other Buddy Program youth participants including at Buddy Program activities.
- c. Guideline: If you are not sure about content you'd like to share, please contact the Buddy Program.