

GUIDELINES FOR CHILD SAFETY

Addendum: Additional Safety Guidelines for Campus-Based Programs

This document serves as an addendum to the Community-Based Guidelines for Child Safety, and outlines the following additional guidelines relevant to Bigs and Littles meeting in a campus setting:

- Supervising a Little
- Remaining On-Site
- Communication with Littles When on Break
- Seeing a Little Outside of the Program
- Conflict Response and Resolution

Supervising a Little

Bigs are responsible for the safety and well-being of your Little when you are spending time together. While spending time on campus, it is important for Bigs to keep their Little's safety in mind.

One guideline to remember is that the Big and their Little should spend the time on campus in public spaces. These include the gym, outdoor areas, the cafeteria, the library, the auditorium, etc. If a match is in a space like a classroom, make sure to keep the door open. Also, it is NOT PERMITTED to have a Little in a Big's dorm room. This guideline is in place to protect you.

***If Bigs and Littles are swimming in a pool on campus, appropriate accommodations must be made for Little to change in a private space; the match is also expected to know & follow all guidelines outlined under "Boating & Water Activities" in the Community-Based Guidelines, as well as all facility and/or campus guidelines.

While we expect matches to spend at least half of their time one-on-one, we recognize that in a campus environment, matches may occasionally interact with friends/peers for part of a Big's visit. For example, participating in a group kickball game. During those times that Bigs are interacting with their Littles and their peers, remember to focus the interaction within the match. Furthermore, remember that only the Little's parents/guardians have given permission for their Big to spend time with their child. Therefore, Bigs should never be alone with other kids who are not their Littles. Also, although you may know and be friends or friendly with the other Bigs in the program, it is not okay to leave your Little alone with another Big in our program (ex. their friend or sibling's Big) without prior approval from the agency and the Little's parent/guardian.

It is also important that Littles get back to the bus on time. If a Little is not back it is a safety concern.

Remaining On-Site

Matches are expected to stay on campus during outings, unless they speak with their Match Advocate and Little's Guardian in advance to approve an outing off campus. For example, if there are local restaurants and parks outside of campus that a Big wants to share with their Little, they need to talk through these plans beforehand and seek approval. Bigs should also make sure to allot enough time for

travel, so the match is back on campus in time. If Bigs are driving, they are expected to follow all car safety guidelines outlined in the Community-Based Safety Guidelines.

Matches should be aware that BBBS has recommendations around finances and spending, so should also consider any costs associated with off campus outings prior to making plans – see “Seeing a Little Outside of the Program” and the Community-Based Guidelines for additional guidance around managing and navigating these costs.

Communicating with Littles When on Break

We encourage Bigs and Littles to keep in touch over school vacations such as winter break, spring break, and summer vacation. Matches generally keep in touch over the phone, through letters, and through email. Bigs are also welcome to communicate with their Little outside of the planned outings during the course of the year. If a Little has their own phone, Bigs need to get their Little’s parent/guardian’s permission for them to have their Little’s contact information and communicate with them directly.

***While we do not encourage matches to do this too often, campus-based Bigs sometimes may use their phones, personal laptops, or school computers to watch videos, listen to music, or play games. Whether connecting online over a break/outside of the program, or even spending time on a cell phone/online when together on campus, matches are expected to follow all online guidance outlined under “Social Media” and “Music, Movies, & Video Games” in the Community-Based Guidelines. It is important for Bigs to ensure that they are only exposing their Littles to age appropriate music, movies, or video games since they are mentors and role models. It is a Big’s responsibility to review the content of various media to determine if it should be included in an activity.

Seeing a Little Outside of the Program

If a match is interested in meeting outside of program during breaks, they must discuss this option with their Match Advocate before moving forward. Matches must be matched for at least three months before they are eligible to meet outside of the program. If both Big and Little are interested in this, the Match Advocate supporting the match must be contacted to discuss the idea with all parties, including Little’s parent(s)/guardian(s).

Matches who see each other outside of our program generally do free and low cost activities in the community, such as going to a college sports game, going to museums, playing in the park, or grabbing a meal. Transitioning to meeting outside of the program brings up other safety considerations, so please make sure you review the Community-Based Safety guidelines in their entirety.

Conflict Response and Resolution

When interacting with other kids, be aware that bullying can quickly escalate into physical fighting. If a Big is getting the sense that their Little is angry or that another kid is getting angry at their Little, encourage them to separate and take some time away from each other. If a Big is in a situation where a fight between their Little and another kid(s) breaks out, it is NOT your responsibility to break it up. We don’t want a Big putting themselves in danger, nor in a position of liability. Get your Match Advocate as soon as possible to help address the situation. If a fight ends before your Match Advocate is aware, make sure to inform the agency staff right away about the fight regardless, so that he or she can follow up with the kids involved.

After an incident like this, we encourage Bigs to follow up with their Littles. Sometimes Littles won't want to talk about a fight right after it happens, and that's okay. Bigs can wait until they are calm to discuss it, even if that means waiting until the next visit.

Helpful Tips

- Approach the conversation from the perspective of wanting to understand what happened and of wanting your Little to understand what led up to the fight.
- Don't rush into problem-solving mode and steer clear of lecturing your Little. If you do so, your Little may feel like you don't understand him/her.
- Help your Little identify other constructive ways of handling similar situations in the future.

A Note on Secrets & Confidences:

As outlined in the Community-Based Guidelines, Bigs should raise any concerns about their Little's safety. If a Big witnesses or hears from their Little about any harmful behavior or experiences, they should notify their Match Support Coordinator right away (e.g. concerns of abuse or neglect, hurting themselves or someone else, bullying, physical altercations, use of medication without supervision, use of illegal substances, hateful or exclusionary language). Additionally, Bigs should also always notify their Match Support Coordinator right away if they suspect that their Little's safety is jeopardized in any way. (e.g. if a Big were to see any unusual physical marks on their Little). Bigs have a responsibility to connect with Match Support about concerns for their Little regardless of whether the Little has asked that Big keep the conversation private.