

Community Based Ground Rules

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada (BBBSNN) prioritizes child safety and privacy, as well as creating a positive, respectful and appropriate mentor relationship between volunteer adult Bigs and youth Littles. The following guidelines have been established to ensure the safety and well-being of the children we serve:

1. Match communication

- a. Matches are expected to be in contact every week and meet in person **at least** twice a month, with the goals of developing a relationship, and maintaining consistency.
- b. Parent/caregiver must be notified of the time, day, and location of each outing planned between a Big and Little and approve each outing.
- c. Weekly method of match communication should be decided:
 - Matches have phone call privileges—is this possible?
 - Matches may also communicate via text, email, social media, or other means with prior approval of parent/caregiver.

2. Activity Budget & Gifts

- a. Most activities should be free or low cost, not to exceed \$40 a month.
- b. It is okay for the match to do something special occasionally.
- c. Parent/caregiver may help cover the cost of match activities.
- d. Gifts from the Big (worth no more than \$25) should be limited to their Little's birthday, holidays, or other special occasions.
- e. Big should check with their Match Support Specialist (MSS) before giving their Little things they no longer use such as clothes, computers, bikes, etc.
- f. Big **may not** provide financial or monetary assistance to the youth or family.

3. Youth supervision

- a. Big is responsible for the supervision of their Little at all times and may not leave the youth with someone else.
- b. Youth should be picked up and dropped off at their door and a parent or other responsible caregiver, such as another relative, needs to be at home.
- c. If no one is home when picking up or dropping off the child, the Big should:
 - Call the parents and let them know they are taking or dropping off the child.
 - Get the name and number of another relative or neighbor in the area ahead of time.
 - Call the BBBS office to see if we have any other names/numbers.
 - If the above do not work, call the police.
- d. If the Little is 12 or older, and usually stays home alone, the Big may drop them off to stay home alone only if parent/caregiver has provided prior approval to do so.

4. Discipline

- a. Big should provide clear expectations and boundaries before each outing, for example, where at the park the child may play or that the Little needs to stay within eyesight.
- b. Big should provide encouragement, support, and direction, but should in no way be involved in disciplining a Little.
- c. If a Big is having difficulty with their Little's behavior during an activity, they should first try to re-direct their behavior. For serious behavior concerns or where safety is at risk, they should contact the parent/caregiver right away and consider ending the activity early.
- d. Big should let the Little's parent/caregiver and their MSS know of any challenges.

- e. The match relationship should not be used as a reward or punishment; seeing the Big should not be contingent on the child's behavior.

5. Including Others

- a. The match must have been meeting at least three months before permitted to invite another person to join them on an outing. This does NOT include an agency planned group Match Activity, where guests are not permitted unless otherwise stated.
- b. Activities where other people are included may not exceed one per month.
- c. If others are invited on an activity, remember that the Match Promise and BBBSNN approval is limited to Big's current Little only. If another child or person is injured, liability will fall on Big's shoulders, as that person is not a part of our one-to-one program.

6. Transportation

- a. Big must practice safe driving, which includes following all traffic laws and avoiding distractions, such as cell phone calls.
- b. Big and Little must wear seatbelts at all times.
- c. Children under 12, or those who are older but small for their age, need to ride in the back seat of vehicles. If they have to ride up front, the air bag needs to be turned off. A booster seat should be used for Littles under 60 lbs or under age 6.
- d. Big must keep current car insurance and license with them at all times. Big must also provide a copy of current car insurance and license to the Agency.
- e. Little is not allowed to operate any vehicle without proper license/permit and parent approval.
- f. Big may take Little to/from approved location(s) deemed appropriate by parent/caregiver and BBBSNN only.
- g. Big is to avoid transporting their Little's family members or children from the waiting list.
- h. Big may not allow others to provide transportation for youth (i.e., spouse or friend of Big may not be the driver if going along on an activity).
- i. Big should provide transportation for match-related activities only.

7. Bike, Skating, Skiing, Snowboarding Safety

- a. Little and Big must wear helmets and should consider other protective equipment as well.
- b. Local sporting goods stores rent helmets, and Kiwanis and other local groups hold Bike Rodeos, child safety booths or other fun and educational safety trainings. Ask your MSS for resources.

8. Motorcycles, Quads and other off road Motorized Vehicles

- a. Helmets and proper clothing must be worn.
- b. Safety classes are offered at local motorcycle retailers and matches are encouraged to attend.

9. Water Safety

- a. Big should ask Little's parents how well s/he can swim before participating in water activities
- b. Big should ask their Little to tell them water safety rules before the activity.
- c. Life vests are required for motorized water craft. It is also strongly recommended to use them for canoeing, rafting and other water activities besides swimming.
- d. Stick to areas with life guards when possible.

10. Out of State Activities

- a. Out of state trips require that parent/caregiver fills out a permission form in advance.
- b. Big must keep that permission form with them when transporting the youth across state lines.
- c. A copy must also be provided to your MSS in advance.

11. Photos, Digital Technology & Social Media

- a. Big and Little may take photos of their activities. Parents/caregivers should be notified if photos are taken and have the right to view all photos.
- b. Big must request parent/caregiver permission to post a photograph of a Little in a public place or in any media, including but not limited to newspapers and social media sites such as Instagram.
- c. Little's privacy must be maintained at all times during the match relationship. Big may not post any information (photos or commentary) that contains specific identifying information, such as: Little's last name, the school the Little attends, Little's address, information about the Little's schedule, etc.
- d. Use of social media (e.g., befriending on Facebook) between Big, Little, and Little's family is not encouraged, however, may be used with parent approval. Private messaging via Messenger may be an effective option to maintain contact when phone/text is unreliable. Please discuss this in advance with your MSS.
- e. If the Agency believes that the Big's online activity does not represent the Agency or appropriate role modeling, BBBSNN may close the match.

12. Weapons

- a. Any firearms, archery, and/or other weapons ownership by the Volunteer Big applicant must be:
 - i. Disclosed to BBBS's Agency Staff at enrollment and throughout the life of the match;
 - ii. Disclosed to the child's parent/caregiver by BBBSNN Staff; and
 - iii. The Volunteer Big must attest to the fact that any weapons, firearms or ammunition ownership are licensed, permitted, registered, and handled in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws.
- b. All firearms, archery, and/or other weapons must be made inaccessible to a child at all times while in the Volunteer Big's care.
- c. Big may not keep any type of weapon on their person nor in their vehicle while meeting with a Little, even if Big has a valid permit to do so.
- d. Big must have weapons locked in their home if a Little is going to be present, with firearms and ammunition kept separate. A BBBS staff member must verify this before a home visit can occur.
- e. Matches may not participate in any activities that include any type of weapon, unless participating in specific, approved activity(ies), which the parent/caregiver, Big, and BBBSNN Staff have approved in advance. Such approval must be documented in the match file.
 - i. Activities that include archery may be considered.
 - ii. Any activities that include guns/firearms, including Air Soft, BB, paint ball, rifles, and handguns are **prohibited** and will **not** be considered. Examples of such activities include but are not limited to: paint ball, hunting, indoor or outdoor range target practice, and skeet shooting.

13. Home Visits

- a. The following must occur before a child may visit the Big's home:
 - the match has been meeting for at least three months and requests advance permission to meet for a specified activity at the Big's home,
 - a signed parent permission to allow home visits is received by the MSS,
 - BBBS staff has visited Big's home and approved the activity.
- b. If approved, any activities at Big's home must be limited to no more than four a year, with advance notice to the MSS each time. A Parent permission form does not have to be submitted for each visit, but the parent must know and approve each time.
- c. Bigs should introduce pets carefully. Parent/caregiver must know about Big's pets. Big should provide some information about being around new animals to Little prior to meeting pet(s).
- d. Guns, knives or any other weapons need to be locked and put away. Guns should be unloaded and stored separate from the ammunition.

- e. Adult materials (books, magazines, posters, movies, etc), alcohol and medications need to be put away in an area that is not easily visible or assessable by Little.
- f. Little must be supervised if using computer, television, or other media.
- g. Big may not leave a Little alone or under the supervision of someone else in their home.

14. Cell phones

- a. Phones should be put away when spending time together.
- b. Use of phone or calls, texts, music, social media, or other features should be limited to emergencies or when necessary for the activity (e.g., to look up directions).

15. Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Use

- a. Big may never use tobacco or alcohol during outings with their Little, even if it has been offered by the parents
- b. Drug use at any time while being a Big is strictly prohibited and will result in match closure
- c. Big is expected to model and encourage healthy life style choices including saying no to drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

16. Overnight Visits

- a. Overnight visits are only permitted for Community Based matches after completion of one year in a Community Based match relationship.
- b. Overnight activities are limited to special opportunities with educational value, where without the overnight element, the activity either could not occur or would be significantly disrupted (e.g., camping trip, visit to college campus).
- c. Overnight visits may not occur more than one time in any twelve-month period, the overnight activity may not exceed two nights, and at least one year must separate overnight activity requests.
- d. To request an overnight visit with his/her Little the Big must contact the BBBSNN at least two weeks prior to the date of activity for the appropriate application and consent form;
- e. Parent/caregiver and BBBSNN (MSS) must provide written authorization to the Big prior to the activity and Parent/caregiver and/or BBBSNN reserve the right to deny approval for an overnight activity for any reason
- f. Big and Little must have separate sleeping quarters (e.g., separate tent, separate room).
- g. Little may share sleeping space with same sex, similarly aged youth, but Little must have own bed or sleeping bag.
- h. Big must ensure that Little has a private space to change clothes.

17. Personal Space & Privacy

- a. Remember that everyone has his or her own sense of personal space and boundaries. The Little is old enough to change clothes and use the restroom without help. Big should allow their Little privacy, unless illness or disability requires their assistance.
- b. When going to the gym, Little should change at home or have access to a private area to change and avoid exposure to unclothed individuals in the locker room.
- c. Rough housing, tickling, play fighting, wrestling and other similar physical activities are not appropriate.
- d. Hugs, high fives, handshakes or a pat on the back are appropriate ways to show affection, but Big or Little should ask first before giving a brief hug.
- e. If either the Big or Little has poor boundaries for personal space, they should communicate to the other what they're comfortable with and ask their MSS for further help on dealing with this.
- f. Big may not keep a secret for their Little if it involves the safety, health, or wellbeing of the Little or anyone else.
- g. Big may never ask nor suggest that a Little keep a secret for them.

18. Talking about dating, sex, drugs, gangs or other difficult topics

- a. Big should encourage Little to make healthy, positive, age appropriate choices
- b. Big must tell their MSS right away if difficult topics come up in order to:
 - Help decide what advice and information is appropriate to provide as a Big
 - Help determine what information must be shared with parent/caregiver and possibly law enforcement/child protective services
 - Help find resources for themselves and their Little
 - Respect a Little's embarrassment, worries, and concerns about privacy concerning these topics

19. Medical Emergencies and Accidents

- a. Big should keep Little's medical card and emergency contact number with them at all times, as it includes crucial medical information re: allergies and medications. It also gives Big permission to seek medical care for the youth in the event the parent cannot be reached.
- b. For minor cuts or bruises, it is okay for the Big to administer basic first aid. However, Big cannot give any medication (even Tylenol) to their Little.
- c. For more serious injuries, like a sprain or a cut that may need stitches, Big should call the parent/caregiver and ask where they would like them to take their child.
- d. If it is an emergency, the Big should call 911 or go straight to the hospital and call the parents from there.
- e. Big should let the parent/caregiver and your MSS know about any injuries incurred while on an activity. The Big should also inform both of any accident, regardless of whether or not an injury occurred, e.g., if the match got into a fender bender, or if the Little fell off their bike, but appears okay.

20. Child Abuse

- a. All BBBSNN Staff and Volunteer Bigs, upon having knowledge of an incident of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, or having reasonable cause to believe a child has been or is being abused, neglected, or exploited **MUST**:
 - report to law enforcement or child protection authorities immediately and no later than 24 hours by phone, in accordance with state and federal law;
 - inform BBBSNN of any incident or allegation of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation

We agree to abide by the Ground Rules provided in this document. **We understand that violations of Ground Rules may result in Match closure.**

Little's Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

Big's Signature

Date

Match Support Specialist's Signature

Date