

School-Based Ground Rules

Everyone associated with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Helena and Great Falls (BBBS) plays a role in ensuring the safety of the children we serve. The following guidelines have been established to help our matches form healthy, long-term friendships based on care and trust.

FOR EVERY PARTICIPANT

1. Mentors are not substitute parents and will not interfere with a parent's role as authority figure.
2. We will remain in close contact with BBBS by promptly responding to phone calls, email or letters. We agree to comply by BBBS standards for our set contact schedule.
3. We will contact BBBS immediately if a concern surfaces.
4. This is an open friendship – No secrets.
5. We will notify BBBS of any changes to our contact information.
6. We will inform BBBS of any changes to our personal life that might affect the match (serious illness, moving out of the area, change in marriage status, involvement with law enforcement, etc.).
7. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Harassment may include financial requests, requests for household tasks or unreasonable time requests. Harassment may also include inappropriate conversation or sexual comments.
8. Confidentiality protects all parties from unauthorized disclosure of information given to BBBS. In this case, confidentiality refers to any personal information about a person and their family that the person prefers to keep private. As the match develops, all parties must maintain the agreement of confidentiality. However, the following circumstances warrant breaking this agreement. Under Montana law, BBBS staff have the duty to report knowledge or suspicion of child abuse, neglect, and the endangerment of self or others. The Big and Parent are expected to report any such knowledge or suspicion to BBBS. Likewise, the Little must report any situation in which they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. Seeing my Little consistently and having a one-to-one relationship with him/her is very important. I agree to communicate consistently with my Little and his/her parent/guardian.
2. There is no place for alcohol, tobacco or drugs in the presence of the child. The volunteer agrees to abstain from these substances while in the child's company.
3. The child's personal space is important, and we will avoid all contact that might make them uncomfortable. Certain types of physical contact such as tickling, wrestling, pinching, patting, back rubs, or having a child sit on your lap are likely to violate personal boundaries and are strictly prohibited.
4. I will not engage in activities that pose a risk of injury while with my Little.
5. I understand that I must never leave my Little alone with anyone other than myself or school staff.
6. I will limit gift-giving to special occasions only (such as birthdays or holidays) and will check about appropriateness with BBBS.

7. I will never use physical punishment or harsh means of verbal discipline.
8. I will clearly communicate boundaries and expectations with my Little. If my Little misbehaves, I will respond appropriately.
9. I will never display or discuss any materials of an inappropriate sexual nature, including but not limited to, viewing pornography and/or sexually suggestive materials.
10. Parents/Guardians must give written approval to BBBS for me to post information, including images, relating to the match on social media. In the event that such permission is granted, I agree to:
 - a. Never post the last name of my Little or their parent or guardian;
 - b. Never "tag" my Little in a post;
 - c. Never post any contact information of my Little;
 - d. Never post any other identifying information about my Little;
 - e. Never post anything that could be perceived as judgmental or offensive to my Little and/or their family;
 - f. Be aware of other postings on their social media pages that are not appropriate for minors;
 - g. Know that as a BBBS volunteer, I am a role model at all times.
11. I will honor the importance of properly ending a match by participating in the closure process.

SCHOOL PROGRAM SPECIFICS

1. Seeing each other consistently at school is the most important thing we can do for our match. We commit to meet once per week at school during the year.
2. The volunteer will contact the school and BBBS staff if they experience a conflict and are unable to attend the scheduled meeting. Staff or school personnel agree to get a message to the child.
3. The volunteer will call ahead to the school to ensure the child is in attendance on days they will visit.
4. The volunteer will wear clothing that is appropriate for school (for example, no t-shirts advertising alcohol or tobacco, no revealing clothing, etc.)
5. The match agrees to meet ONLY on school grounds, at school-sanctioned events or at events staffed by BBBS personnel (with the permission of the parent).
6. The volunteer may not transport the child.
7. The match will not exchange phone number/email/social media information, unless pre-arranged with BBBS.
8. If the match wishes to transition to a Community-Based setting for activities, the volunteer agrees to contact BBBS to discuss the process for transferring. Transitions are at the discretion of BBBS.
9. The volunteer and child agree to abide by all school rules and policies.
10. ALL Bigs promise to be someone a child can count on.
11. ALL Littles promise to do their best at home, at school and in the community.

We accept our responsibilities as members of BBBS and agree to abide by the above guidelines. We understand they are established for the benefit of the match relationship. We agree to hold BBBS and all members, agents, representatives and employees of BBBS harmless and free from liability.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Child Signature

Date

Match Support Signature

Date

