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Big Brothers Big Sisters Member Agencies (National Network)

In this Manual, the term ‘young people’ refers to both children and young people.

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ABN 75-071-682-294
Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia draws on 100 years of international experience and expertise. Our name and logo are synonymous with quality program delivery and best practice.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia was established in 2002 to:

- Assist the development of Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs throughout Australia
- Establish minimum standards for program delivery in accordance with international standards
- Provide accreditation* and ongoing support to Member Agencies
- Develop innovative models for mentoring responsive to the needs of young people and their families
- Act as a national voice and advocate for youth mentoring

The National Office assists Member Agencies with:

- Information and advice regarding program establishment
- Staff training and professional development
- Possible access to funds from government, business, and philanthropic trusts and foundations
- Promotion and publicity
- Policy and program development
- Evaluation and research
- Access to local and international research

*Member Agencies are required to sign a Program Agreement and demonstrate compliance with the respective Procedures Manual prior to being accredited by Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia.

The National Office does not:

- Provide direct service to young people and families
- Carry legal or financial responsibility for Member Agencies

Member Agencies have a responsibility to:

- Participate in initial and ongoing accreditation
- Maintain compliance with the Program Agreement, National Standards and respective Procedures Manual
- Protect the intellectual property of Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Remain accountable and transparent
- Agree to the appropriate use of Brand guidelines
- Operate in accordance with Big Brothers Big Sisters Fundraising Agreement
- Participate in network meetings
- Provide program updates and statistical data to the National Office
- Participate in policy development and evaluation
- Work towards the ongoing promotion and development of Big Brothers Big Sisters’ mentoring programs
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>Community-Based Mentoring</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standards of excellence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guiding principles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research and evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversification of mentoring models</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 2</th>
<th>Volunteer Selection Criteria</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualities of good mentors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer selection criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding volunteer selection criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applicants who are partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applicants who are parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red flags for volunteer selection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red flags for child sex offenders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3</th>
<th>Volunteer Selection</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of personal information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures for volunteer selection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Gut feelings’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 4</th>
<th>Young Person Referral and Assessment</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selection criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures for referral and assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family and Children's Court orders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consent from the non-residential parent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waiting lists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 5</th>
<th>Matching</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedures for matching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 6</th>
<th>Match Support, Supervision and Closure</th>
<th>29</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guiding principles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency of supervision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questions for supervision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match reviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disciplinary procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match closure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Special Friends’ matches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-assessment of volunteers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Chapter 7
Child Safety
Positive indicators and red flags for child safety
Positive indicators and red flags for the development of the friendship
Red flags for sexual abuse

Chapter 8
Record Keeping
Filing system

Chapter 9
Unsuitable Applicants or Participants
Equal Opportunity Laws
Advising unsuitable applicants or participants
Volunteer Assessment Report

Chapter 10
Policies
Safety Related Policies
Overnight stays
Attendance at camps
Involvement of partner, family and friends in match activities
High risk activities
Home visits
Administration of medication
Match travel
Consent for the use of photos
Staff Supervision and Development
Privacy Policy
Health Policy
Child/Young Person Safety Policy
National Criminal Records Check and Working with Children Check Policy
Additional Policies

*Please contact BBBS of Australia to request permission to reproduce content in this document.*
Big Brothers Big Sisters was established in Australia in the late 1970’s to provide young people, in need of additional support and friendship, with a caring mentor and positive role model. Big Brothers Big Sisters community-based mentoring involves the development of a long term one-to-one friendship between an adult volunteer and young person aged 7 to 17 years. Our program is based on the simplicity and power of friendship.

At Big Brothers Big Sisters, we believe that all young people need to feel valued and important. Research has demonstrated that mentoring can empower young people to reach their potential, make positive changes in their behaviour, and build self-worth, trust and relationships at home and school.

Volunteer mentors come from all walks of life with a wide variety of interests and experiences. They have in common a desire to make a meaningful contribution to the life of a young person. Mentors commit to spending quality time with a young person; a minimum of one hour 3 to 4 times per month for a minimum of 12 months, undertaking a range of simple and inexpensive activities. Prospective volunteers are carefully selected to help ensure only the most suitable applicants are matched with young people.

This Procedures Manual outlines minimum standards for:
- Volunteer selection
- Young person referral and assessment
- Matching
- Match support, supervision and closure
- Child safety
- Record keeping
- Staff supervision

A series of ‘tools’ (forms, standard letters etc.) are also provided in this manual. Member Agencies may implement minor amendments to the content or format of tools.

Our model for program delivery represents the minimum standards believed necessary to safeguard participants and provide a high quality service to young people, their families and volunteers. These standards comply with those of Big Brothers Big Sisters International.
Standards of excellence

Quality - We are committed to delivering high quality, relevant and responsive mentoring programs for young people and their families.

Growth - We are committed to continued growth at all levels including board, funding, program delivery, volunteers and matches.

Leadership - Big Brothers Big Sisters is recognised as a leader in youth mentoring both nationally and internationally. We remain committed to excellence in program delivery and the development of innovative initiatives which engage community, schools, business and government.

Guiding principles

The following principles guide our community-based mentoring program:

- Voluntary participation for young people, families and mentors
- Active participation of young people in decision making processes
- Respect for the needs, interests and rights of participants
- Effective program design and delivery based on consultation, research and evaluation
- Non-discriminatory policies and procedures inclusive of cultural and religious diversity
- Accountability to participants, partnering agencies and key stakeholders

Key objectives

- The delivery of a high quality and cost effective mentoring program
- The facilitation of positive outcomes for participants including long-term matches
- Financial sustainability and continued growth

Child safety

Big Brothers Big Sisters is committed to the safety of young people participating in our mentoring programs. Our commitment includes:

- An understanding of child abuse and key red flags or negative indicators
- Documented policies and procedures for volunteer selection
- Child safety training aimed at safeguarding young people, identifying and reporting child abuse
- Ongoing match support and supervision including monitoring of compliance with policies and guidelines
- Clear boundaries for staff and volunteers
- A Child/Young Person Safety Policy including a documented process for responding to complaints/allegations
- Supervision of staff and ongoing professional development
- Quality assurance including the review of open files and volunteers’ training needs
- A duty of care to protect participants and avoid acts or omissions which could reasonably be foreseen to injure others
Rural, indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Big Brothers Big Sisters recognises the need for flexibility in program delivery. In order to remain responsive to the needs of rural, indigenous and culturally diverse communities, Member Agencies may submit proposed variations to the community-based mentoring program. Proposals must be submitted in writing and approved by the National Executive or Board prior to implementation.

Research and evaluation

Big Brothers Big Sisters is committed to research and evaluation. Consent for the use of non-identifiable data is obtained from volunteers and parents/guardians at the time of application. Where possible, annual evaluations will be undertaken by a suitably qualified professional or company and approved by the relevant Ethics Committee or, in the absence of an Ethics Committee, the Member Agency’s Board of Management.

Diversification of mentoring models

Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia endorses the development of alternative models for mentoring under the name Big Brothers Big Sisters. Continued growth and innovation in this regard will enable Member Agencies to remain responsive to the needs of young people in their local communities and to apply for funding.

Alternative mentoring models may:

- Extend eligibility for young people to 25 years
- Target specific communities
- Vary the frequency of contact for participants
- Have a specific focus e.g. career/vocation

Proposed models, or variations to the Procedures Manual, must be submitted in writing and approved by the National Executive or Board prior to implementation.
Chapter 2

Volunteer Selection Criteria

Qualities of good mentors
The American National Mentoring Partnership lists the following qualities of successful mentors:

Sincere desire to be involved in the life of a young person by helping them to pursue their interests, achieve their goals and handle tough decisions.

Respect for young people without the need to ‘rescue’.

Ability to actively listen, suspend judgement, ask thoughtful questions and give the young person an opportunity to explore their own thoughts.

Empathy for the young person by understanding what they are going through, without being caught up in the problem.

Ability to see solutions and opportunities supporting the young person to make decisions.

Volunteer selection criteria
Whilst no formal qualifications or experience is required, applicants will be assessed according to the following selection criteria:

1. Appropriate motivation for volunteering
2. Capacity to develop a positive friendship with a young person and act as a role model
3. Maturity and responsible judgement including effective problem solving skills and an ability to set boundaries
4. Quality relationships with partner, family and friends
5. Relative stability in employment
6. Good general health
7. Home environment suitable for a young person
8. Ability to meet the minimum commitment. An applicant who is over-committed may experience difficulty maintaining the friendship despite a sincere intention.
In addition, an applicant is required to:

9. Be at least 18 years of age and provide proof of identity totalling 100 points at the first interview.
10. Reside within the designated region. Lengthy travel times may result in matches closing early.
11. Demonstrate a willingness to request support, receive supervision and provide regular updates regarding match progress.
12. Have a viable means of transport (public transport or car). Drivers are required to have a valid driver’s licence, registered vehicle and minimum liability insurance as required by State law.
13. Agree to undergo the Big Brothers Big Sisters selection process.

**Understanding volunteer selection criteria**

1. **Appropriate motivation**
   An applicant’s motivation for volunteering needs to be consistent with the objectives of community-based mentoring. Assess the applicant’s reasons for volunteering, their expectations and any match preferences. While an applicant can expect to receive personal satisfaction from mentoring, individuals whose motivation is based primarily on self-interest or a desire to ‘save or rescue’ a young person will be inappropriate. As a general guideline, the less prescriptive a volunteer is regarding match preferences, the greater their potential to meet a young person’s needs and the lower the risk of inappropriate motivations.

2. **Capacity to develop a positive friendship and act as a role model**
   Whilst prior experience is not essential, an applicant must be capable of developing a positive friendship with a young person and act as a role model. For example, an individual who is excessively defensive or dominating during an interview may not relate appropriately or may prove too overwhelming for a young person.

   Since young people often test adults, the most successful volunteers are those who are able to move forward in a friendship, despite the occasional ‘ups and downs’. An adult who is inflexible or impatient may not provide the support that a young person needs.

   Similarly, an applicant who is overly judgemental is apt to have difficulty adjusting to differences. Often, the values and lifestyles of young people and their families will be quite different to those of a volunteer. An ability to accept these differences and minimise judgement is likely to contribute to the success of a match.

   Develop an understanding of the applicant’s experience with, and attitude towards, young people. Look for individuals with a positive approach, an ability to accept difference, patience and good listening skills.

3. **Maturity and responsible judgement**
   An applicant is required to demonstrate maturity and responsible judgement. Assess an applicant’s capacity to problem solve and manage stress. An applicant may be required to address problems which arise in the match or support a young person with decision-making. Consider ability to set boundaries and the appropriateness of planned activities. Some individuals with an ‘adventurous spirit’ may use poor judgement in selecting match activities.

4. **Quality relationships**
   Develop an understanding of personal relationships. ‘Ideal’ relationships are not a prerequisite, since conflict and change from time to time is inevitable. Rather than look for the ‘ideal’, focus on how the individual has handled conflict and their overall satisfaction with their relationships.
Applicants experiencing conflict in their relationship, separation or divorce may otherwise be excellent candidates yet unlikely to be suitable due to their current circumstances. Where appropriate, invite the applicant to re-apply at a later time.

Assess the likelihood and appropriateness of the applicant’s partner, friends or family being involved in the match. Refer to the Safety Related Policies in Chapter 10.

5. Relative stability in employment

Look for applicants who are generally content with their employment/career and those who demonstrate relative stability in work history.

6. Good health

An applicant is required to have good general health. Refer to the Health Policy in Chapter 10. Applicants have an obligation to disclose any health condition, which may pose a risk to the health and safety of program participants.

Applicants who disclose prior use of alcohol and/or drugs must demonstrate they have remained abstinent for a significant period of time. Consult your supervisor.

7. Suitable home environment

As match activities may occur in a volunteer’s home, consider the safety and suitability of the applicant’s home and neighbourhood. Refer to ‘Home Visits’ in Chapter 3.

Applicants who are partners

Assess applications from partners separately with a view to matching each partner with a young person. Couple mentoring is not an option.

Carefully consider:
- Should one partner be deemed unsuitable, this may influence the motivation of the successful applicant
- Time spent with their respective matches may impact on the couple’s time together which may lead to early match closures
- The one-to-one aspect of mentoring

Applicants who are parents

Parents may apply to become a Big Brother/Sister. However, there are important issues to consider including:
- Age of the applicant’s children and their likely response to their parent’s involvement with another young person
- Proposed arrangements for child care or involvement during match outings*
- Motivation for volunteering
- Time availability
- Volunteers may occasionally involve their children in match outings at the discretion of the coordinator and Member Agency although the above factors need to be considered.
Red flags for volunteer selection

Red flags are indicators that would cause a reasonable person to question the suitability of an applicant. The presence of red flags may deem an applicant unsuitable and therefore ineligible.

NB. The indicators below do not constitute an exhaustive list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Criteria</th>
<th>Red Flags</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate motivation</td>
<td>Volunteering because of loneliness, a lack of fulfilment/direction, feelings of grief/loss or personal crisis/trauma; major changes anticipated in the next 12 months.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity to develop a positive friendship</td>
<td>Appslicants who:</td>
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<tr>
<td>and act as a role model</td>
<td>• View the role as pseudo parental or ‘welfare’ oriented</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Hold unrealistic attitudes or expectations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Are likely to have difficulties relating to a young person</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate self-centredness, low self-esteem or limited communication skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Are overly shy or passive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• State previous over-involvement with children. Refer to the red flags listed in Chapter 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective problem solving skills and ability</td>
<td>Limited self-awareness/insight; poor life skills, stress management and decision-making; over-compliance; disregard of guidelines/rules; resistance to feedback; blaming of others and difficulty assuming responsibility.</td>
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<tr>
<td>to set boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of relationships with partner/family</td>
<td>Disclosures of abuse and violence (as either a victim or offender). Where an applicant has been the victim of violence, it is essential they no longer be at risk or experiencing trauma. Unresolved issues from childhood; couple currently in counselling; distant/confictual relationship with own children; unresolved ‘access’ issues; recent or pending birth of a child; a general lack of support; a negative emotional climate at home; a family that has poor boundaries; partner and/or family unaware, or not supportive, of application; motivation for volunteering is to compensate for a lack of quality relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships with peers</td>
<td>An applicant who is socially isolated, has few/no adult friendships or changes friendship groups frequently; friendships which are strained, distant or conflictual; a belief that children make the best friends; unrealistic expectations about friendships or relationships and over-dependence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employment | Unstable work history or long-term unemployment; unexplained gaps or changes in employment; overly dissatisfied with their work and stating poor relationships/conflict with colleagues.

Eligibility Criteria | Red Flags
Education | Applicants whose current attitude towards education is unlikely to be supportive of young people; inappropriate attitudes towards education.

Health | Health conditions likely to adversely impact upon the match or pose a risk to health and safety.

Home environment suitable for a young person | Children’s toys, videos/DVDs, games or the like for which there is no logical explanation; access to unsafe or age-inappropriate items; evidence/suspicion of drug use during the home visit.

Sexuality/religion | A desire to ‘convert’ others; arrogance and inflexibility; homophobic, sexist or racist attitudes.

**Red flags for child sex offenders**

It is extremely difficult to identify a child sex offender, as there are no conclusive profiles or distinguishing characteristics. Offenders come from all walks of life and socio-economic groups and can be male, female, married, single, heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual. Many conceal their behaviour by maintaining respectability and superficial compliance. It is important to keep an open mind and avoid stereotypes. The following are common red flags.

**NB.** The indicators below do not constitute an exhaustive nor conclusive list.

| Inappropriate interest in working with young people
| Requests to be matched to a young person who has experienced abuse/neglect
| ‘Grooming’ behaviour e.g. gifts/befriending families
| A habit of giving excessive or inappropriate attention to young people
| An inability to recognise appropriate adult/child relationships. That is, an adult who primarily interacts with children and views them as their best friends.
| Interests/hobbies which are appealing to young people. Equipment at home appealing to young people.
| Inability to set limits/boundaries with young people e.g. breaking rules and unsafe behaviour are permitted
| Inappropriate attitudes towards sexuality
| Use of inappropriate (or sexualised) language to describe children e.g. “clean, pure, innocent”
| Lack of empathy for others
| Difficulty managing anger and propensity to violence. Inappropriate expectations regarding discipline.
| Frequent and unexpected changes in employment and address
| Regular overseas travel to destinations where child sex tourism is prevalent
The documents listed below may be used to verify identity (Financial Transactions Reports Regulations, 1990). Where an applicant is unable to provide the required identification, a coordinator in consultation with their supervisor, may elect to accept identification totalling less than 100 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>Passport (only one per applicant)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship certificate</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth certificate</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licence issued under a law (e.g. driver's licence, firearms licence)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID card issued by employer (name and address)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID card issued by employer (name only)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter from employer (within last two years and confirming name and address)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates notice</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit/debit cards/passbooks (only one per institution)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicare card</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club, union or trade/professional membership card</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational institution membership card</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passport for recent arrival in Australia (less than six weeks)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3

Volunteer Selection

Volunteer selection aims to ensure that young people are matched only with those volunteers considered most suitable for the role. Acceptance of volunteers is dependent on applicants meeting the selection criteria and the absence of any red flags. Big Brothers Big Sisters is under no obligation to accept or assign an applicant to a match. No person will be accepted until we are confident of suitability.

It is preferable to notify unsuitable applicants early on. Uncertainty about an applicant at an early stage tends to be confirmed rather than allayed by further investigation. Where doubt exists, make a decision in the best interests of the young person. Out of courtesy and respect for applicants, those deemed unsuitable must be advised prior to the commencement of training.

Most applicants are likely to be suitable and our aim is to provide quality service to volunteers by converting a high number of enquiries into mentors as soon as possible. If we take too long to process applicants, we risk losing them. More than one member of staff may be involved in assessing the one applicant.

Volunteer selection entails a number of stages. These include:

1. Volunteer Enquiry
2. Information Provision and Orientation
3. Application Form
4. First Interview
5. 100 Point Identity Check
6. National Criminal Record Check (NCRC) and Working with Children Check (WWCC)
7. Three References
8. Psychological Profile
9. Second Interview
10. Home Visit
11. Final Assessment and Match Recommendations

For successful applicants only:

12. Child Safety and Volunteer Training
13. Ongoing contact
Collection of personal information

Big Brothers Big Sisters only collects personal information necessary for its functions and activities. For further information pertaining to the collection and use of personal information, refer to the Privacy Policy in Chapter 10.

Relevant personal information obtained from volunteers is used to:

- Assess suitability
- Establish matches
- Promote health and safety
- Promote the best interests of the child
- Protect the longevity of matches

Personal information may be disclosed to Big Brothers Big Sisters management, staff, consultants or advisers, medical practitioners or other program participants.

For further information regarding disclosure of health information, refer to the Health Policy in Chapter 10.
Procedures for volunteer selection

1. Volunteer Enquiry

- Respond to enquiries in a friendly manner; this sends an important message to volunteers that we value and appreciate them. Aim to build positive rapport and motivate prospective volunteers to apply. This is particularly important for individuals who cannot volunteer at present but may wish to do so in future.
- Invite prospective volunteers to lodge an application or attend an information session. It is not appropriate to conduct an assessment at this point, although it is worth noting any concerns which arise.
- Respond to web-based or phone enquiries as soon as possible (preferably within one workday) and be prepared for periods when higher than usual enquiries may be expected such as during a recruitment campaign.
- Follow up volunteers who enquire but elect to “decide later”. Obtain the contact details for these volunteers and re-contact within the month.

2. Information Provision and Orientation

Program information may be provided face to face, via the telephone, through electronic or printed formats or at an information session. Provide sufficient information to guide a volunteer's decision to apply.

- As a minimum, ensure a prospective volunteer receives a Position Description (3.1), Application Form (3.2) and program brochure.
- Additional documents may include an office location map and copies of relevant press articles.

3. Application Form

An Application Form must be completed prior to the first interview. A hard (not electronic) copy, with the applicant's signature, is required. Volunteers are expected to actively pursue their applications. Inactivity at this point is likely to indicate a lack of commitment. Volunteers will be required to re-submit an application if they allow their application to lapse for more than 12 months.

- Check the agency database for any previous applications submitted by the applicant.
- Create a file and attach a Record of Applicant’s Progress Form (3.3). Update this form throughout the selection process.
- Where an applicant is deemed not suitable, place all documentation including the Volunteer Assessment Report (3.10) in the unsuccessful applicants file. Refer to ‘Advising Unsuitable Applicants’ in Chapter 9.
- Refer the application to a colleague if the applicant is personally known.

4. First Interview

Volunteer interviews are intended to: orientate the applicant, build rapport, assess suitability, identify and explore any red flags, and consider match preferences.

Ideally, to avoid fatigue, interviews should not exceed 1.5 hours. Treat all applicants with respect, although do not be afraid to ask questions. Maintain control of the interview and do not allow the applicant to interview you or to stray from answering the questions. Elicit only the required information rather than details, or history, which may not be relevant. The amount of information collected does not reflect the quality of an interview. Rather, an applicant’s thoughtful and honest answers and your assessment are more important.
• Following receipt of an Application Form, schedule an interview as soon as possible.
• Call the applicant the workday prior to the interview as a reminder of the appointment. This will reduce non-attendance and enable the applicant to ask any questions or seek further clarification.
• Remind the applicant to bring the identification necessary for their 100 Point Identity Check, NCRC and WWCC. Refer to the relevant sections in this chapter.
• If an applicant cancels the interview, re-schedule as soon as possible. If more than one appointment is cancelled, assess availability and motivation.
• For security reasons, confirm that a colleague will be present in the office during the interview.
• Review the Application Form to familiarise yourself with the applicant’s details.
• Conduct the interview utilising the First Interview Schedule (3.4).
• Pay attention to your feelings (refer to ‘gut feelings’ at the end of this chapter), listen carefully and observe body language. Note any red flags that require further investigation.
• Summarise your overall impressions. Remember that your memory and feelings are the strongest immediately following the interview. Consult your supervisor as required.

5. 100 Point Identity Check
To be conducted at the conclusion of the first interview, where it is likely the applicant will proceed to the next stage.

• Accept original documentation only.
• Record the number or similar identification code for each document (3.4).
• For privacy and security reasons, do not photocopy identification.
• A WWCC may not form part of the Identity Check requirement.

6. National Criminal Record Check and Working with Children Check
A NCRC and WWCC are mandatory for all applicants.

National Criminal Record Checks
NB. Refer to the NCRC Policy in Chapter 10.

A NCRC will search for any offence committed in Australia. The cost may be incurred by either the Member Agency or volunteer, as determined by the Member Agency. In some cases, a reduction in fees may apply (i.e. ‘volunteer rate’).

Although not a requirement, Member Agencies may elect to conduct a NCRC on an applicant’s partner or household members. A Member Agency may also elect to conduct checks for volunteers (and associated parties) on an ongoing basis.

Irrespective of the above, a volunteer must inform Big Brothers Big Sisters of any charges or convictions they (or any person likely to have contact with the young person) incur during the life of the match.

Where a NCRC reveals a disclosable court outcome and/or pending matter, consult your supervisor and refer to the NCRC Policy in Chapter 10.
• In the first instance, a Member Agency or applicant may receive the results of a NCRC. Check the guidelines in your State.
• At the conclusion of the first interview where it is likely the applicant will proceed to the next stage, obtain signed authorisation to undertake a NCRC and witness the signing of the form. Photocopy the relevant identification, attach to the form and send without delay. Alternatively, request the applicant obtain a check as soon as possible. Inform the applicant they cannot be matched until their NCRC is sighted.
• Provide the applicant with a copy of the NCRC Policy.
• Applicants who hold an existing police check are not required to undertake a NCRC providing their police check involved a national search and is not more than three months old.

Working with Children Check
A WWCC is required for applicants in Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland. The WWCC in NSW does not currently apply to volunteers.

Member Agencies are required to implement an appropriate system for ensuring the renewal of WWCC certification. Volunteers are expected to hold valid certification at all times.

• Sight any current WWCC certification held by the applicant and record the details in the applicant’s file.
• Where a WWCC has been obtained from another jurisdiction, the applicant will be required to obtain a check issued by your State.
• Where the applicant does not hold a current WWCC, request they lodge an application as soon as possible.
• A WWCC may take several weeks to be issued. Inform the applicant they cannot be matched until the check is sighted, although they may continue with the selection process.

7. Three References
Applicants successfully completing the first interview are required to nominate 3 referees: a current employer/supervisor (relevant to employment, voluntary work or study), a friend and a third person (who knows the applicant well). Where quality references are not obtained in any of these categories, additional references will be required. A fourth reference may be obtained from a child/youth agency (where the applicant has previously worked or volunteered), a family member or young person. Written references (and confirmation by phone thereafter) are required in all instances.

Referees, other than employer/supervisors, are required to have known the applicant for a minimum of 2 years, maintained regular contact and be in a position to vouch for character and suitability.

Employer/supervisors are required to have known the applicant for a minimum of 12 months. Where the applicant has been employed for a period less than 12 months with their current employer, the name of a previous employer/supervisor may be provided. Alternatively, at the discretion of Member Agencies, a reference may be accepted from the current employer, although not where the period of employment has been less than 6 months. At times, a reference from an employer/supervisor may not be possible for certain applicants e.g. students or retirees. In these instances, obtain a third reference from a person who has known the applicant for at least 2 years.

The fact that it may be difficult or inconvenient to contact the referees supplied (e.g. the referees are based overseas or have subsequently left an organisation) should not be justification for accepting lower standards of compliance.
Assessing the referee’s comments

The better the referee knows the applicant, the more reliable their opinions are likely to be. The level of detail provided in the reference will generally be an indication of the referee’s knowledge of the applicant.

References which speak glowingly of the applicant’s “love for children”, “children’s trust in him” or similar should be treated as red flags requiring further attention. However, also consider that such terms may be used because the referee believes it to be favourable. Discuss any concerns with your supervisor and the referee.

If a reference has not been received, contact the referee to ask if there is a problem. Any reluctance to supply a written reference is likely to indicate concerns.

Verbal references

Where a referee does not wish to provide information in writing, encourage the person to speak truthfully and report any concerns. Offer reassurance to the referee that information of a sensitive nature will not be recorded and we will not discuss their reference with the applicant. Under Privacy laws applicants and participants have a right to access their personal file including Referee’s Reports. This right should be kept in mind when recording the details of any conversation with a referee and communicating with an applicant or participant.

- Request the applicant complete a Referee Nomination Form (3.5).
- Send referees a Referee Cover Letter (3.6) and the relevant Referee Report (3.7 and 3.8) either by post or email. Where posted, include a self-addressed envelope.
- References (with the referee’s signature) must be returned by post.
- Contact referees by phone following receipt of the reports to check the authenticity of the reference, and to verify the applicant’s identity and (where relevant) employment history.
- Discuss any concerns and ask if there is anything the referee would like to add.
- Appropriately investigate any ‘unfavourable’ references.
- Maintain confidentiality when speaking with referees.
- Make the appropriate entries in the volunteer’s file.

8. Psychological Profile

A minimum of two references must be returned prior to booking a Psychological Profile. When in doubt, it is advisable to wait until all three references have been returned.

The Psychological Profile is an objective way of assessing psychological and social adjustment. Big Brothers Big Sisters endorses the use of MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) or PAI (Personality Assessment Inventory). Member Agencies must appoint a qualified Psychologist to assess the profiles. Contact Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia for further information.

- Organise for the applicant to undertake the profile at the conclusion of the First Interview where it is likely they will proceed to the next stage. Applicants should be in a private environment, alone and without significant distraction when undertaking the profile.

   Explain to the applicant:
   - The profile is not a ‘test’ - there are no right or wrong answers
   - Not to agonise over their answers but to record their immediate response
   - The answers to individual questions are less important than the overall impressions gained from the profile
   - A decision regarding suitability is not made solely on the basis of a profile
9. Second Interview

The Second Interview is conducted in a similar manner to the first.

- Ensure a minimum of two references and the Psychological Profile have been returned.
- Only conduct the interview where it is appropriate to continue with the selection process.
- Issue a copy of the Health Policy (by post, email or in person) prior to the interview. Allow the applicant time to read the policy before commencing. The Policy outlines an applicant’s obligation to disclose any health condition which may pose a risk to the health and safety of program participants.
- Utilise the Second Interview Schedule (3.9).
- Follow up any issues or red flags arising from the First Interview, references, Psychological Profile and NCRC and WWCC (where available).

10. Home Visit

As match activities may occur in the applicant’s home, a visit is conducted to assess safety and suitability and meet household members (usually one hour in duration).

- Conduct the visit in a professional yet relaxed manner.
- Request that the applicant’s partner (even where not living with the applicant) and other household members be present.
- Inspect all rooms and yard/garage and check there are no unsafe items e.g. power tools, knives, firearms, matches, flammable or poisonous substances, medication etc. accessible to young people. Request these be out of reach. Explore any other safety issues (pets, balconies, access to water, fencing of pools etc.). Some of these factors are more relevant to younger children. The aim is to encourage the volunteer to think about safety.
- Look for any household items that may be age-inappropriate e.g. books/magazines, adult movies, pictures.
- Gauge the level of support for the applicant’s involvement with Big Brothers Big Sisters.
- As appropriate, discuss possible matches and any issues to date. Allow the applicant to ask questions or clarify information. Re-confirm (especially where there has been a delay between the interviews and home visit) that no significant changes are expected in the next 12 months.
- Conduct a home visit each time a volunteer changes their place of residence. Although not a requirement, Member Agencies may elect to undertake a home visit when there are changes to members of a volunteer’s household.
- Record your visit in the volunteer’s file including any notable risks or safety issues.
- Appropriately investigate any concerns identified during the visit.
- Undertake a NCRC for any household member (or partner) where concerns are held.
11. Final Assessment and Match Recommendations

- Review the information collected during each stage and make a decision regarding suitability. Where required, obtain supervisor approval.
- Where an applicant has been successful, notify the volunteer in writing (3.11) and record match recommendations in the file.
- Unsuccessful applicants may be advised in person, by phone or in writing. Refer to ‘Advising Unsuitable Applicants’ in Chapter 9.

12. Child Safety and Volunteer Training

Once accepted and prior to matching, volunteers are required to participate in training and induction, including child safety. Refer to Big Brothers Big Sisters Child Safety Manual and the Child/Young Person Safety Policy in Chapter 10.

- Keep a record of attendance and training content. This record becomes important in the event Big Brothers Big Sisters needs to demonstrate (e.g. in a court of law) that relevant information was provided to a volunteer during training.
- Issue a copy of the Child/Young Person Safety Policy. Applicants are required to provide written acknowledgement they have read, understood and agree to be bound by this policy (3.12). This acknowledgement must be obtained prior to the Match Meeting stage.

13 Ongoing contact

- Maintain regular contact and communication with a new volunteer to sustain commitment and enthusiasm pending matching. Match the volunteer as soon as possible following acceptance.

‘Gut feelings’

During volunteer selection, it is important to identify the source of any ‘gut feelings.’ Was it something in the applicant’s manner, choice of words, presentation, body language or attitude? Or are there inconsistencies in answers or less than convincing reasons for gaps in employment or frequent moves?¹

Do not ignore these feelings; there is a fair chance that something is wrong. Like red flags, your concerns should not be grounds for immediate disqualification but, instead, cause for further investigation.¹

Consider re-checking a reference or asking a colleague to attend an interview. It may be preferable not to communicate your feelings but rather wait to see if your colleague holds similar concerns.

Discuss the issue with your supervisor and where misgivings cannot be allayed; make a decision in the best interests of the young person.
Summary of procedures for volunteer selection

Volunteer Enquiry
   ↓
Information Provision and Orientation
   ↓
Application Form
   ↓
First Interview
   ↓
At the conclusion of the First Interview:
   100 Point Identity Check
   Issue NCRC Policy
   NCRC and WWCC
   Three References
   ↓
Two references returned (and verified)
   ↓
Psychological Profile
   ↓
Two references returned (and verified) and Psychological Profile returned
   ↓
Issue Health Policy
   ↓
Second Interview
   ↓
Home Visit
   ↓
Final Assessment and Match recommendations*
   ↓
Issue Child/Young Person Safety Policy
   ↓
Child Safety and Volunteer Training
   ↓
Ongoing contact with volunteer pending matching
   ↓
Match

*NB. Sight the NCRC and WWCC prior to the final assessment.
## Tools for volunteer selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Tool Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Position Description</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Application Form</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record of Applicant's Progress Form</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Interview Schedule</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referee Nomination Form</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referee Cover Letter</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referee Report</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee/Supervisor Referee Report</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Interview Schedule</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Assessment Report</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Volunteer Acceptance Letter</td>
<td>3.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance of 'Child/Young Person Safety Policy' Form</td>
<td>3.12</td>
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Chapter 4

Young Person Referral and Assessment

Young person selection criteria
To be accepted, a young person must be:
- Between 7 to 17 years of age (or up to 25 years for approved mentor programs)
- Experiencing disadvantage and/or risk
- Capable of establishing a one-to-one friendship with a mentor
- Available and willing to participate in the program. An assessment of the young person’s willingness to participate is required.
- Living within the designated region

Parent/guardians need to be:
- Supportive of their child’s involvement
- Experiencing relative stability and not in crisis
- Willing to adhere to program guidelines

Referrals may be received from parent/guardians, in particular, mothers requesting a male mentor for her child; teachers; concerned members of the community; young people or service providers. It is important to note that mentoring is not appropriate for all young people, particularly in circumstances where the needs of the young person, or their family, are beyond the scope of the program. Careful assessment is required to ensure the young person and their family can be involved in an effective and ongoing way.

Big Brothers Big Sisters will not act on a referral received from a third party. A parent/guardian must lodge an application on behalf of their child.

Referral and assessment involves:
1. Initial referral/phone assessment
2. Application Form
3. In-person interview with the parent/guardian and young person
4. Written assessment and match recommendations
5. Child safety training for the young person and parent/guardian
Procedures for young person referral and assessment

1. Initial referral/phone assessment

- Upon receiving an enquiry, assess whether the referral is likely to meet the selection criteria.
- If the referral is likely to meet the selection criteria, post/email a Young Person Application Form (4.2).
  Attach the relevant cover letter (4.1) and your program's brochure.
- As appropriate, ask whether assistance is required with completing the Application Form.
- Where the referral does not meet the selection criteria, inform the caller of the reason for this and assist in identifying alternative options and/or refer to a more appropriate service.
- Encourage the caller to phone if they have any queries.
- Where the caller is a young person, advise them that parental consent is required.
- Where the caller is not a parent/guardian, send an Application Form to the parent/guardian if they are supportive of the referral. Otherwise, send the application to the caller to be forwarded to the parent/guardian.
- Inform the caller that an Application Form does not guarantee a match.

2. Application Form

An Application Form with a signature from the parent/guardian is a legal requirement. A young person cannot be considered for matching until an application is received. Consent from a non-residential parent may also be necessary. Refer to the relevant sections in this chapter.

- Upon receipt of the Application Form, assess eligibility.
- If required, with parental consent, contact the young person's teacher and any professionals involved with the family. Parental consent must involve the parent/guardian being advised of the nature of the information being sought and the name of the person(s) Big Brothers Big Sisters proposes contacting. A third party must receive a copy of the ‘Privacy Notice and Authorisation for Release of Personal Information’ signed by the parent/guardian (4.2) prior to releasing information about or relating to the young person.
- As soon as possible, advise as to whether the application has been accepted or declined.
- Send an Acknowledgement of Application Letter (4.3).
- Create a file for the young person.
- Where there are delays, keep the family regularly informed.

3. Parent/guardian and young person interviews

The parent/guardian and young person interviews may be conducted following receiving an application or prior to the match agreement stage. Refer to Chapter 5.

4. Written assessment and match recommendations

- Following the parent/guardian and young person interviews, complete a Young Person/Family Assessment Report (5.3). Refer to Chapter 5.

5. Child safety training

Once accepted, a young person and their parent/guardian are required to participate in child safety training prior to matching. Refer to Big Brothers Big Sisters Child Safety Manual.

- Keep a record of attendance and training content. This record becomes important in the event Big Brothers Big Sisters needs to demonstrate (e.g. in a court of law) that relevant information was provided to a young person or their parent/guardian during training.
Family and Children’s Court orders

Big Brothers Big Sisters is obligated to comply with any Family or Children’s Court order affecting the young person. Where both parents have joint or shared responsibility for the child (as determined by a court order), both are required to consent to mentoring. Failure to seek consent from the non-residential parent may place Big Brothers Big Sisters at risk of breaching an order.

Consent from the non-residential parent

| · Determine whether any Family Court or Children's Court order, affecting the young person, has been issued. |
| · Where an order has been made, request a copy from the residential parent and place in the young person's file. |
| · Where parents have joint responsibility, obtain consent from the non-residential parent (4.4). |
| · If no order applies or the whereabouts of the non-residential parent is unknown, then consent from the residential parent will suffice providing all reasonable attempts have been made to contact the non-residential parent. |
| · Where a copy of the order cannot be obtained, attempt to ascertain the frequency, times and location for contact with the non-residential parent and advise the volunteer. |
| · Advise the volunteer not to meet with the young person when contact with the non-residential parent is expected. This will avoid the volunteer breaching the order. Ask the residential parent to inform you of any changes to the order (and obtain a copy) or any changes not reflected in the order. |
| · Consent for participation in match activities/outings organised by Big Brothers Big Sisters is only required from the residential parent/guardian. Match activities are a 'day to day' type issue, for which the residential parent is responsible. In this instance, the residential parent will decide whether consent is required from the other parent. |

Waiting lists

Agencies may elect to maintain a waiting list should the number of referrals exceed mentor availability. Note, however, that young people, families and referring agencies often anticipate a match will take place once a referral is placed on the waiting list despite being advised of time delays.

| · Advise parents/guardians that the waiting list does not operate on a 'first come first served' basis, but rather is managed according to the needs of the young person and availability of mentors. |
| · Maintain a minimum of six monthly contact with parent/guardians to confirm ongoing need and interest. Record each contact in the young person's file. |
| · Request that the parent/guardian advise you of any changes to their address, contact details or circumstances. This will avoid not being able to locate the family when a match is identified or keeping a young person on the waiting list when they no longer meet the criteria. |
| · Following approval from one’s supervisor, a waiting list may be temporarily closed for a specific geographic region and/or gender should it be evident that waiting times will be excessive. It is also appropriate to remove a referral from the list e.g. when the family cannot be contacted despite all reasonable effort. |
| · Young people on the list may be included in outings or activities organised by Big Brothers Big Sisters. |
Tools for young person referral and assessment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Cover Letter to Parent/Guardians</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Person Application Form</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample Acknowledgement of Application Letter</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Resident Parent Consent Form</td>
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</tbody>
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Chapter 5

Matching

Matching begins when an applicant and young person have been approved. Our aim is to establish matches that have the greatest likelihood of lasting a minimum of one year. A number of factors are considered when matching: location, interests, the needs of the young person and family, preferences, abilities and personality.

Most young people are matched with mentors of the same gender. However, female volunteers may be matched with younger boys. Note that Big Brothers Big Sisters does not match girls with male volunteers.

There are several steps involved in matching.

1. Identification of a potential match
2. Parent/guardian and young person interviews (these may be conducted following receipt of an Application Form or during the matching stage prior to the match agreement)
3. Match meeting
4. 24 hour ‘cooling off’ period
5. Match confirmation

Procedures for matching

1. Identification of a potential match

Identifying a suitable match calls for professional judgement. Consult with your colleagues or supervisor as required.

- Review the volunteer’s file. Consider issues such as location, interests, preferences and personality traits etc..
- Identify one or two young people who may be an appropriate match.
- Review the young person’s file and identify their specific needs and interests.
- In the event a suitable young person is not available, contact relevant schools or service providers to identify a possible referral.

2. Parent/guardian and young person interviews

The purpose of the interviews is to:

- Assess whether the young person and parent/guardian meet the selection criteria
- Assess the young person’s needs and any factors which may impact upon the match
- Observe family dynamics and consider how the introduction of a mentor may impact on relationships.
- Assess the parent/guardian’s capacity to support the match and accept the boundaries attached to a mentor’s role
• Consider some of the qualities a volunteer would need to possess to be appropriately matched with the young person

• Outline program guidelines including the responsibilities of the parent, young person and volunteer

| Issue a copy of the Health Policy (by post, email or in person) and allow the parent/guardian time to read the document prior to the interview. The policy outlines a parent/guardian’s obligation to disclose any health condition (related to their child) which may impact on their child’s involvement in the program or other participants. |
| Review the young person’s file and note any additional questions to the Parent Interview Guide (5.1) and Young Person Interview Guide (5.2). |
| Where appropriate, ask the parent/guardian whether they require or would prefer an interpreter. |
| Interview both the parent/guardian and young person separately. Ensure that the details on the Young Person Application Form are up to date. |
| Where the family home does not allow for the necessary level of privacy, consider an alternative location. |
| In the event of a decision not to match a young person, where possible, provide the parent/guardian with an alternative referral. |
| Complete a Young Person/Family Assessment Report (5.3). |

3. Match meeting

The next step involves scheduling a match meeting to enable participants to meet one another and gain a mutual understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The meeting is generally held at the family home and is attended by the coordinator, young person, parent/guardian and volunteer. The duration of meetings is usually one hour.

Goals for the match are established during the match meeting and thereafter reviewed regularly, including a written review at least annually.

| Prior to scheduling a Match Meeting, ensure that the Acceptance of ‘Child/Young Person Safety Policy’ has been returned (3.12). |
| Contact match participants and outline the proposed match. If all parties agree, confirm a date and time for the meeting. |
| Consider whether an interpreter, or other support worker, may be required. The latter may be relevant where the referral was instigated by a service provider. |
| Meet the volunteer outside the family home before the scheduled meeting. |
| Facilitate introductions. Allow for a level of anxiety and tension given the unavoidable contrivance of the situation. |
| Give the volunteer and young person time alone to get to know each other. Encourage them to talk about their hobbies and interests. During this time, speak with the parent/guardian and assess their response to the volunteer. |
| In the presence of the parent/guardian and volunteer, read through the Match Agreement (5.5). Confirm that they understand and agree to the guidelines prior to signing. |
| Ask the parent/guardian to read the Acknowledgement of Participation (5.6). Confirm their understanding prior to signing. |
| Read through the Young Person Match Agreement (5.4) with the young person. Confirm their understanding prior to signing. |
| Request that the parent/guardian complete the Authorisation for Medical and Dental Treatment Form (5.7). |
| Where required, obtain Consent for the Administration of Medication (5.8). |
• Discuss possible match goals. Goals may be broadly defined and should be developmental in nature rather than prescriptive.
• Explain that the paperwork will be returned as soon as possible, following the 24-hour ‘cooling off’ period and pending confirmation to proceed.
• If a parent/guardian cancels their appointment, or is not at home at the time of the home visit, reschedule for as soon as possible. If a parent continues to cancel or miss appointments, determine whether there is sufficient commitment to proceed.

4. 24 hour ‘cooling off’ period

Following the meeting, each participant is given a 24 hour ‘cooling off’ period to decide whether they wish to proceed. Where a young person or parent/guardian does not agree with the match, attempt to gauge the reasons for their decision. Any decision not to proceed will be respected and an alternative match will be sought.

Whilst the ‘cooling-off’ period also applies to volunteers, it is expected a volunteer will progress with the match unless there are exceptional reasons to warrant withdrawal.

5. Match confirmation

• Where there is agreement to proceed, complete a Match Justification and Summary Form (5.9).
• Send the volunteer a Congratulations Letter (5.10) and copies of the: Match Agreement (5.5), Authorisation for Medical and Dental Treatment (5.7) and Consent for the Administration of Medication (5.8).
• Send the young person a Congratulations Letter (5.11) and a copy of the Young Person Match Agreement (5.4).
• Send the parent/guardian a Congratulations Letter (5.12) and copies of the: Match Agreement (5.5), Acknowledgement of Participation (5.6), Authorisation for Medical and Dental Treatment (5.7) and Consent for the Administration of Medication (5.8).
• Follow up any party that does not make contact. A lack of contact does not necessarily indicate a lack of interest.
• Complete a Match Profile Form (5.13) and attach to the front of the match file.

Tools for matching

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Tool Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Guardian Interview Guide</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Person/Family Assessment Report</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Match Agreement for Young People</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match Agreement</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Acknowledgement of Participation</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
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<td>Match Justification and Summary Form</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Congratulations Letter – Volunteer</td>
<td>5.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Congratulations Letter – Young Person</td>
<td>5.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Congratulations Letter – Parent/guardian</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match Profile Form</td>
<td>5.13</td>
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Chapter 6

Match Support, Supervision and Closure

Guiding principles

- New matches have a greater likelihood of early closure and require increased support and supervision
- The initial stages of the match are focused on building the friendship with limited and reasonable expectations regarding any immediate outcomes
- Supported matches are more likely to result in positive outcomes for match participants
- Supervision during the life of the match is fundamental to monitoring child safety
- Support is tailored according to the needs of the match
- Increased contact is maintained where red-flags are identified

Key objectives

To promote safety by:

- Monitoring match progress, activities and the consistency of information received from participants
- Recognising behaviours and activities that pose a risk to young people
- Monitoring compliance with child safety policies and guidelines
- Regularly reviewing the match file

To support the development and longevity of the match by:

- Monitoring the match to ensure the experience remains positive for all participants
- Promoting ‘acceptance of difference’
- Demonstrating genuine concern for participant’s well-being and empathy during difficult experiences
- Soliciting and providing feedback. Mentors often require reassurance and encouragement and a coordinator may need to inform a volunteer of positive feedback received from a young person, their family, school or service provider.
- Providing guidance to young people e.g. how to develop a friendship, what it means to have a mentor, saying ‘thank you’ etc.
- Assisting with strategies/problem-solving before, or when, issues arise
- Encouraging participants to identify and resolve issues
- Reviewing progress towards match goals
Identifying strengths and achievements
Reviewing volunteer’s ongoing training needs
Building positive relationships with Big Brothers Big Sisters
Making appropriate referrals and acting as an advocate where required
Celebrating success

Match support

It is common for matches to experience difficulties, particularly during the early stages. With support and assistance most are resolved. Where problems arise, engage participants in a problem-solving approach and encourage them to resolve the difficulty themselves. Initially this may involve supporting participants to identify the issues and consider options for resolution. This approach is likely to provide a learning experience, in addition to promoting a greater investment in the outcome. As appropriate, suggest mentors contact each other. Peer support of this kind can assist with knowledge sharing and normalising feelings.

A range of issues within the family can threaten the success of a match. For example, competition between siblings triggered by the extra attention being received by one child or a parent/guardian feeling threatened by the mentor. This requires careful management and, in particular, protecting the volunteer from becoming embroiled in these issues.

Support may be provided on an individual or group basis e.g. regular volunteer support meetings and ongoing training.

Frequency of supervision

Frequency of supervision will vary between matches, although the guidelines below outline the minimum standards. Member Agencies are required to provide alternative arrangements for match supervision where a staff member is on leave.

Volunteers are equally expected to maintain contact with their coordinator. It may be preferable to book supervision on a regular day and time convenient to both parties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Standards for Match Supervision*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial contact within 72 hours of first activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First 6 wks - weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 wks to 6 mths - fortnightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 12 mths - monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 mths to closure - monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one contact a year in person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Acceptable forms of supervision include in person, by telephone and by email. Email contact cannot be used in consecutive months.
Questions for supervision

A series of questions for use during match supervision is included on Form 6.2. These questions are not exhaustive and are intended as a guide only. Select those most appropriate to gain an understanding of match progress and to review child safety.

Record match contacts using the Match Supervision Log (6.1) and make a corresponding entry in the match file including:

- Issue/s of concern
- Action recommended and/or implemented by match participants
- Resolution, or otherwise, of issues
- Referral to external agencies
- Activities undertaken
- Compliance with the minimum time requirement and child safety guidelines
- Match progress

Safety Related Policies

Refer to the Safety Related Policies in Chapter 10.

Match reviews

Match reviews are conducted at 3 and 12 months post matching and thereafter annually until match closure. The 3 month review may be conducted in person or over the phone. Annual reviews are to be held in person.

The purpose of match reviews is to:

- Review child safety and match progress
- Allow participants to give and receive feedback
- Identify and resolve any issues/problems
- Re-visit the match agreement and assess the match in relation to these guidelines
- Close a match if necessary. Any recommendation to discontinue the match will require supervisor approval.

In addition, the 12 month review is intended to:

- Where relevant, allow participants an opportunity to close the match in a positive manner
- Review progress towards match goals and/or re-establish new goals
- Acknowledge and celebrate the achievement of one year
- Provide volunteers with an opportunity to participate in a formal performance appraisal

3 month reviews

- Organise to meet the young person, parent/guardian and volunteer at the family home. Separately meet the young person beforehand e.g. take them out to lunch.
- Utilise the 3-Month Review Questions (6.3)
- Complete the 3-Month Review Report (6.4) and place in the match file
- Update the Match Supervision Log (6.1)
- For phone reviews, speak with all participants separately and utilise the above tools
12 month reviews

- Organise to meet the young person, parent/guardian and volunteer at the family home. Separately meet the young person beforehand e.g. take them out to lunch.
- Utilise the 12-Month Review Questions (6.5)
- Complete the 12-Month Review Report (6.6) and place in the match file
- Update the Match Supervision Log (6.1)
- Add any new agreements to the Match Agreement (5.5)
- Where relevant, update the Consent for the Administration of Medication (5.8)
- Re-assess match goals

Annual reviews

- Utilise the 12-Month Review Questions, complete the 12-Month Review Report and place in Match File (6.5 and 6.6)
- Update the Match Supervision Log (6.1)
- Update the relevant consent forms
- Re-assess match goals

Disciplinary procedures

Member Agencies are required to develop a formal Disciplinary Procedures Policy outlining the process for managing a volunteer’s unsatisfactory work performance including any breach of policy. Contact Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia should assistance be required.

Match closure

Big Brothers Big Sisters reserves the right to close a match. Reasons for closure may include:

- The well being or safety of the young person is at risk. The presence of red-flags may warrant discontinuation of the match.
- Attempts to resolve issues have been unsuccessful
- The friendship is not being conducted within the agreed guidelines, or is not helpful or positive for the young person
- The friendship between the volunteer and young person deteriorates
- One or more party has acted negligently or illegally
- The volunteer or young person relocates
- The young person develops interests or relationships that preclude time being spent with their mentor. This is more likely to happen as the young person becomes older.
- The match becomes a reliable friendship no longer requiring the support of Big Brothers Big Sisters

Closing a match requires supervisor approval and careful management to avoid any negative impact on participants. As each friendship is unique, the process for closure will vary. Ideally, the closing of a match will be a positive, celebrated event agreed to by all participants.

- Discuss the proposed strategy for closure with your supervisor
- Where possible, schedule a meeting with all participants or meet with the family and volunteer separately
- Send Match Closure Letters to all participants (6.7) and file a copy in the match file
- Complete the Match Closure Form (6.8) and place a copy in the match file
- As appropriate, consider re-matching the young person and volunteer
- As appropriate, provide alternative referrals for the young person and family

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‘Special Friends’ matches

Long-term friendships no longer requiring support and supervision may be ‘promoted’ to a ‘Special Friends’ category. Generally, a match will reach ‘Special Friends’ status after several years and with agreement from participants. Supervisor approval is also required.

For legal reasons, a ‘Special Friends’ match must be formally closed in writing. Thereafter, Big Brothers Big Sisters may provide occasional support and invite these matches to Agency functions.

Re-assessment of volunteers

Volunteers seeking re-matching

Big Brothers Big Sisters reserves the right to re-assess volunteers seeking re-matching.

Re-assessment may involve an abridged version of the selection process, and participation in training or part thereof. Where more than 12 months has lapsed since prior involvement, re-assessment, as a minimum, will entail an interview, NCRC, WWCC, reference checks and a home visit.

In determining due process, consider the:

- Volunteer’s past experience as a mentor and corresponding performance
- Number of previous matches and reasons for termination
- Volunteer’s motivation and ability to meet the selection criteria
- Length of time since previous match closure
- Possibility of conducting one interview rather than two
- Viability of a second Psychological Profile i.e. the MMPI is likely to return similar results if repeated
- Need for training depending on the length of time since completion

Volunteers re-applying to another Big Brothers Big Sisters Agency

Re-assessment will be required where a volunteer has ceased involvement with one Member Agency and wishes to volunteer with another. In these circumstances, Member Agencies may request a copy of the volunteer’s file. Consider the above-mentioned factors.

Volunteers re-applying following non-acceptance

Upon receiving an application from a volunteer previously declined, review their Volunteer Assessment Report (3.10) and/or file. Check the reason for non-acceptance. Any recommendation not to re-assess the applicant will usually signify serious concerns and may warrant not taking the current application any further. Where possible, consult with the coordinator who undertook the initial assessment. Discuss the matter with your supervisor and any decision to proceed will require the applicant to undertake the selection process in its entirety.

Re-assessment of the young person

A young person whose match has been closed early will require re-assessment prior to re-matching. This may include a second home visit to meet with the young person and their parent/guardian.
### Tools for match support, supervision and closure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Tool Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Match Supervision Log</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match Supervision Questions</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Month Review Questions</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Month Review Report</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Month Review Questions</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Month Review Report</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Match Closure Letter</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match Closure Form</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 7

Child Safety

Big Brothers Big Sisters has a legal and moral duty of care to ensure the safety and security of young people. This includes taking all reasonable steps to prevent emotional, physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.

During match supervision, a number of behaviours may be considered red flags for child abuse. Where a volunteer and/or young person exhibit any of the red flags identified below, investigate the situation to ensure the young person is not at risk. This might involve increasing the frequency and duration of supervision. In some instances, the suspension of all match activities, pending further investigation, may be required. Speak with your supervisor prior to suspending any match. You also have a responsibility to report any situation where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a young person is at risk. Refer to Child/Young Person Safety Policy in Chapter 10.

Prompt follow up is required when any of the following indicators are present:

- Over-involvement with the young person or family
- Frequent inclusion of other young people on match outings
- Unauthorised overnight visits

NB. The indicators listed below do not constitute an exhaustive list.

Positive indicators and red flags for child safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Indicators</th>
<th>Red Flags</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young person reports fun, appropriate and safe activities and parent/guardian and</td>
<td>Reports from match participants are inconsistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteer corroborate young person’s report</td>
<td>Young person stops wanting to see the volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parent reports something is not right (‘gut instinct’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young person or parent is not comfortable with activities, conversations,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or other aspects of the friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activities are unsafe or inappropriate e.g. risk taking/rule breaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer frequently involves other children and/or adults in outings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The majority of activities take place at the volunteer’s home or other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>secluded location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young person reports having ‘secrets’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activities centred excessively on photography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young person complains about too much sedentary time (e.g. spending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>time in front of the television at the volunteer’s home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer is keen on or permits overnight stays without permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inappropriate activities with sexual overtones e.g. ‘skinny-dipping’,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>showering together following swimming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Positive Indicators and Red Flags for Child Safety (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Indicators</th>
<th>Red Flags</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behaviours are observed or reported to be appropriate</td>
<td>Behavioural changes (refer to the signs of sexual abuse in this chapter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unexplained changes/deterioration in the friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over-indulgence, or gift/money giving - particularly gifts not associated with birthdays or religious holidays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer is disciplining the young person inappropriately, threatening physical harm or being emotionally abusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer demonstrates:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inappropriate physical contact or displays of affection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of respect for personal space e.g. insists child sit on their lap, tickling, wrestling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inappropriate boundaries e.g. discussion of sexual issues, ‘sex education’ or exposure to adult movies/magazines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over-involvement e.g. increased time spent with the young person, lack of boundaries with the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Grooming’ behaviour e.g. befriending families. Often offenders gain access to young people by first charming adults into believing they are above reproach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A habit of excessive or inappropriate attention towards the young person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inappropriate interest in the sexuality of the young person (e.g. talks about ‘developing body’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexualised conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inappropriate attitudes towards sexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Possessiveness towards young person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer is candid and open to suggestions and direction</td>
<td>Volunteer is reluctant to discuss the details of the match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer is resistant to suggestions, says this case is &quot;different&quot; or guidelines do not apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program guidelines are breached</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Positive indicators and red flags for the development of the friendship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Indicators</th>
<th>Red Flags</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer meets regularly with young person</td>
<td>Meetings frequently cancelled or less than the minimum commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match is self-sustaining and upbeat, participants like each other.</td>
<td>Volunteer becomes “too busy”, loses motivation or does not return calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer is enthusiastic about the match.</td>
<td>Volunteer expresses a need for “time off” or not making a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer requests match closure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants report dislike for each other or problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Match interactions suggest poor communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level of dissatisfaction with Big Brothers Big Sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual interests are discovered</td>
<td>Expectations are not realistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of ideas for activities or mutual interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/guardian and young person are happy with the match</td>
<td>Parent/guardian does not support or is unhappy with the match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer is critical of, or unreasonably complains about, young person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer recognises and encourages young person’s strengths</td>
<td>Volunteer places demands on the young person and is prescriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer is open to suggestions for solving typical age/stage behaviours and</td>
<td>Young person feels pressured to perform; loses interest in the match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrates patience</td>
<td>Lack of patience/understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer supports a developmental approach to the match</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person improves in a needed area: e.g. school performance, hygiene,</td>
<td>Young person’s life becomes more chaotic; loses ground in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication skills</td>
<td>performance, anger management, etc..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Red flags for sexual abuse**

Any one indicator does not necessarily mean a young person is at risk, however, several will require investigation and careful monitoring. The behavioural indicators listed below may also be present during other stressful times in a family's life e.g. divorce, grief/loss, when there are problems at school or during adolescence.

| Nightmares, trouble sleeping, fear of the dark, extreme fear of monsters |
| Loss of appetite, trouble eating or swallowing, stomach illness with no identifiable reason |
| Sudden mood swings: rage, fear, anger or withdrawal, spacing out at odd times, depression |
| Fear of certain people or place, fear of adults e.g. young person may not want to be left alone with a baby-sitter, friend, relative, etc.; or a young person who is usually talkative and cheery may become quiet and distant when around a certain person |
| Young person engages in sexual activities with toys or other children, such as simulating sex with dolls or asking other children to behave sexually, expresses new words for private body parts, age-inappropriate knowledge about sex |
| Refusing to talk about a “secret”, talking about a ‘new older friend’, suddenly having money |
| Cutting or burning oneself as an adolescent, substance abuse, running away from home |
| Regressive behaviours such as thumb sucking, bed wetting, clinging to adults |
Chapter 8

Record Keeping

File notes provide a record of match activity essential for quality program delivery, accountability and risk management. File notes document all actions relating to match participants from the initial assessment through to match closure.

Each file entry should include the:
- name of person/s involved
- date and time of contact or attempted contact
- method of contact (e.g. phone, in person)
- major points discussed
- actions taken or completed
- coordinator’s signature

- Allow for easier reading by leaving a space or ruling a line between entries
- Use past tense
- Consult your supervisor should you have any concern regarding making an entry e.g. where a statement may be perceived as libellous or discriminatory. Maintain records that are respectful of participants.
- Preface subjective impressions or thoughts with qualifying phrases such as, “it seemed”, “it appeared that” or “it is possible that”
- Where possible, provide factual information to support impressions and observations e.g. “it seemed that Mr. Jones was distressed by his divorce, since he cried while talking about his ex-wife.” Make every effort to support your observations with specific observed behaviour.

Filing system

Member Agencies are required to maintain separate files for the:
(a) volunteer
(b) young person and;
(c) match

Member Agencies may elect their preferred system for filing in accordance with Big Brothers Big Sisters Privacy Policy.
Chapter 9

Unsuitable Applicants or Participants

Equal Opportunity Laws

Equal opportunity laws prohibit discrimination of persons on certain specified grounds. These include: gender; sexual orientation, preferences or practices; gender identity or transgender; marital status; pregnancy or potential pregnancy; breast feeding/expressing milk; parental status; status as a carer/family responsibility; impairment/health information; race; religious belief or activity; industrial activity or union activity; political belief or activity; age; physical features; criminal record; personal association. Depending on the circumstances, it may be unlawful for Big Brothers Big Sisters to take into account these attributes when making a decision to reject an application or terminate a participant’s involvement on the above grounds. However, there are a number of situations where Big Brothers Big Sisters can take into account these attributes in making a decision.

Relevant exceptions

There are some circumstances where discrimination is permitted:

- when the discrimination is reasonably necessary to protect the health and safety of any person; where the disability is an infectious disease and the discrimination is reasonably necessary to protect public health.
- if the discrimination is necessary to comply with, or is authorised by, another Act; when required in the ‘best interests’ of the child.

Equal opportunity laws vary between States. There are also differences between State and Federal legislation. As required, it is important to clarify relevant legislation in your State.

Whilst Big Brothers Big Sisters seeks to avoid discrimination of any person, the ‘best interests’ of the young person remains paramount. We therefore reserve the right to ask questions of applicants or participants which may be perceived as requesting discriminatory information. Equally, Big Brothers Big Sisters reserves the right to reject an applicant or terminate a participant’s involvement on a discriminatory ground where it is:

a) reasonably necessary to protect the health and safety of any person
b) required for the ‘best interests’ of a young person; or
c) necessary to comply with, or is authorised by, the law.
Advising unsuitable applicants or participants

It is important to advise unsuitable applicants or participants to be removed from the program in a professional and sensitive manner. Where safety is a consideration, communicate the decision over the phone or in writing.

If there is potential for an applicant or participant to be suitable in the future, (following a change in their circumstances) encourage them to re-apply at a later date. Consider whether the applicant or participant is suitable to provide alternative support to the Agency.

As appropriate, when informing an applicant:

- Open the conversation by asking the applicant for their assessment of the selection process
- Provide constructive feedback
- Advise that the decision was made in consultation with your supervisor
- Provide the reason for non-acceptance. Due care is required when informing an applicant of the reason for non acceptance. Refer to 'Volunteer Assessment Report' below.
- Where it is not appropriate to provide reasons, consider in advance how the decision will be communicated
- Provide alternative options for volunteering
- Thank the applicant for their interest and participation

Applicant/participant disagrees with your decision

If an applicant disagrees with your decision, maintain your professional judgement and agree to differ if this is what is required to end the contact. Reiterate that the decision was reached in consultation with your supervisor.

If the applicant or participant remains dissatisfied and wishes to take the matter further, advise them to make a formal complaint in accordance with your Agency's Complaints Resolution Policy.

Do not allow yourself to be intimated. End the contact where an applicant becomes overly defensive or abusive.

Member Agencies are required to develop a formal Complaints Resolution Policy outlining the due process for making a complaint. The policy must incorporate avenues for all relevant parties including volunteers, parents, young people, service providers and staff. Contact Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia should assistance be required.

Volunteer Assessment Report

Under Privacy Laws applicants and participants have a right to access their personal file including the Volunteer Assessment Report. This right should be kept in mind when writing the Volunteer Assessment Report and communicating with an applicant or participant.
Chapter 10

Policies
Safety Related Policies

Overnight stays
Overnight stays, at any venue, are not permitted for 12 months. Thereafter, approval may be granted in special circumstances with the written consent of the parent/guardian and Big Brothers Big Sisters (10.1). Approval is required for each overnight stay. Prior to consent, ensure there are appropriate sleeping arrangements for the young person.

A Member Agency may elect not to permit overnight stays.
Any unauthorised overnight stays constitutes a breach of the Match Agreement and may result in match suspension. Discuss the matter with your supervisor.

Attendance at camps
At any time during the match, participants may participate in camps organised by Big Brothers Big Sisters or another Agency. Written consent from the parent/guardian and Big Brothers Big Sisters is required (10.2). Prior to consent, ensure that supervision and appropriate sleeping arrangements are in place.

Involving partners, family and friends in match activities
A volunteer may occasionally involve their partner, family or friends in match activities. However, a volunteer is not permitted to leave the young person unsupervised with any individual.
A volunteer is required to inform Big Brothers Big Sisters of any significant change in their relationship status.

High risk activities
High-risk activities require consent from the parent/guardian and Big Brothers Big Sisters (10.3).
Big Brothers Big Sisters may consent to a high risk activity where the named activity is approved by the Member Agency’s insurance provider. Other factors to be considered include: the age and ability of the young person, the proposed adult ratio for supervision and safety measures to be implemented e.g. protective clothing, access to a mobile phone, updated Authorisation to Medical/Dental Treatment Form (5.7) and contact details for next of kin.

Home visits
A volunteer is required to inform Big Brothers Big Sisters of any change to their residence or members of their household.
A change in residence will require a home visit to assess safety and suitability, and meet household members. A young person is not permitted to visit a volunteer’s home until the home visit has been completed.
A home visit following changes to household members may be conducted at the discretion of the coordinator and Member Agency.

Administration of medication
Volunteer and staff are not permitted to administer medication, including aspirin, to a young person without written consent from the parent/guardian (5.8). Consent for the administration of medication is obtained during the Match Meeting and updated as required.

Match travel
Volunteers who wish to use their cars during match activities must have a current Driver’s Licence, registered vehicle and minimum liability insurance. Vehicles are expected to be in a roadworthy condition and volunteers must ensure the use of seat belts at all times.
Consent for the use of photos

Photographs of participants must not be used for internal or external marketing purposes, including recruitment advertising, without consent of the parent/guardian and volunteer (10.4 and 10.5). Consent in respect of a young person will only be effective for a period of two years. Should a Member Agency wish to use photographs beyond this point in time, further consent must be sought.

If, at any stage, a young person, their parent/guardian or volunteer expresses an objection to the continued use of their photographs, Big Brothers Big Sisters will cease to use them. Two months written notice requesting that Big Brothers Big Sisters no longer use one or more of their photos is required. A request of this nature must be complied with.

Big Brothers Big Sisters will cease to use the photographs of a young person or volunteer when they are no longer involved with the program.

Note that consent only extends to Big Brothers Big Sisters. Should another Agency request access to photos, additional consent is required.

NB. Young people who are subjected to a Family or Children's Court order are not permitted to be photographed.

**Tools for safety**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Tool Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consent for Overnight Stay Form</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent for Attendance at Camps</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent for High-Risk Activities</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent for the Use of Photographic Images of your Child</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent for the Use of Photographic Images</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staff Supervision and Development Policy

Member Agencies are expected to make supervision a priority and keep a record of sessions for all staff. Fortnightly supervision is preferred although the minimum requirement is monthly. For new staff or where additional support is necessary, weekly supervision may be appropriate. Sessions will remain confidential unless otherwise agreed. Where a supervisor is on leave, alternative arrangements must be made.

Member Agencies may also provide group supervision, although not as a replacement for individual supervision. Sole worker programs may request participation (via teleconference) in Member Agencies’ group supervision meetings. The viability of such a request including responsibility for payment of calls will be decided by the respective Member Agencies.

Effective supervision entails building self-confidence, skill, knowledge and the promotion of competent practice.

Supervision content
Supervision meetings will be needs driven although must include:

- Review of practice and caseloads
- Support, debriefing and constructive feedback
- Monitoring of compliance with minimum standards and policy
- Performance appraisal
- Assessment of professional development and training

Professional development
Member Agencies are required to provide ongoing professional development for staff.
Privacy Policy

This Privacy Policy describes the personal information handling practices of Big Brothers Big Sisters Australia and its Member Agencies (collectively BBBS).

BBBS is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the personal information that we hold. We recognise that some personal information we hold is of a very sensitive nature. This Policy, which may be changed from time to time, sets out our personal information management practices.

This Policy refers to collection of ‘personal information’ which is information, or an opinion, which identifies an individual or from which the individual’s identity may reasonably be ascertained. It can be in any medium including electronic or paper records. An individual’s name and address are examples of personal information.

Compliance with privacy principles

BBBS observes the National Privacy Principles under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Health Privacy Principles under applicable Health Records legislation.

BBBS complies with these and applicable Privacy Laws or codes of practice to protect the privacy of your personal information.

Collection of personal information

BBBS collects personal information from participants and potential participants, including young people and their families, volunteers, supporters and donors.

BBBS only collects personal information necessary for its functions and activities. The personal information we collect depends on the purpose for which an individual has contact with us. For example, individuals wishing to become Big Brothers/Sisters undergo an extensive selection process where we collect personal information about them such as details about their background, lifestyle, health, interests and motivation.

We also collect personal information about young people and their families who have been referred to us or wish to participate in BBBS. In that case we collect such information as the young person’s health, interests, the relationship between family members and other information about domestic arrangements.

The purpose for collecting personal information about volunteers and families is to:

- Assess suitability
- Establish matches
- Promote health and safety
- Promote the best interests of the young person
- Protect the longevity of matches

Generally, we try to collect personal information directly from individuals; however, there are certain situations where we may collect personal information about individuals from someone else. Such circumstances may include where we seek references about a potential volunteer, or where a service provider refers a young person to us. In either case, we take reasonable steps to make the individual aware of the purpose for which the information is collected.

Where we collect sensitive information, such as health, psychological profile, criminal record or sexual preference, we do so with the individual’s consent (or in the case of young people, with the consent of their parent/guardian or authorised representative as appropriate) or otherwise in accordance with the law.

If you choose not to disclose personal information that is requested by us, then we may choose not to accept you into our program or to remove you from our program.
Use and disclosure of personal information

BBBS will generally use and disclose personal information in accordance with the purpose for which the information was collected, or where the individual (or in the case of young people, where their parent/guardian or authorised representative as appropriate) has consented to the use or disclosure.

BBBS may use and disclose personal information for purposes including: to send an individual further information about our programs, to assess a candidate’s suitability to become a Big Brother/Sister, to match a volunteer with a young person, to monitor the friendship between the volunteer and young person and to process donations.

As part of our selection process, we may disclose personal information about potential Big Brothers/Sisters to law enforcement agencies, referees, psychologists and medical practitioners.

We may also provide personal information about individuals to our service providers or others who assist us in providing our services. For example, legal or professional advisers, insurers or mail service providers.

BBBS may otherwise use or disclose individuals’ personal information where required or authorised by law, which may include emergency situations and assisting law enforcement agencies or where there is a duty to disclose information, for example, where there is concern for the health and safety of participants.

Security of personal information

BBBS takes reasonable steps to protect all the personal information it holds from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. This protection applies to information stored both electronically and in hard copy form.

We will also take reasonable steps to destroy or de-identify personal information if it is no longer required for legal or operational reasons.

Accessing and updating your personal information

If you wish to request access to, or correction of, any personal information BBBS holds about you, please contact us. We request that you provide as much detail as possible about the information you seek so it can be correctly retrieved. In certain circumstances, we may not be required by law to allow access to, or correction of, your personal information. If that is the case, we will provide reasons for that decision.

We take reasonable steps to make sure that personal information we collect, use and disclose is accurate, complete and up-to-date.

BBBS may set reasonable charges for providing access to personal information (those charges will not apply to lodging a request for access).

Contact details

If you have any questions or comments about privacy, or wish to make a complaint about the way in which BBBS has handled your personal information, please contact us.
Health Policy

Policy Statement

1. Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) has a duty to provide and maintain a healthy and safe environment for all employees, volunteers, young persons and others involved with BBBS.

2. All people involved in BBBS, have a duty of care towards other persons involved in BBBS.

3. All people involved in BBBS are required to disclose health conditions that may impact on the safety of participants ("relevant health information").

4. BBBS will collect and use information collected about a person’s health in accordance with good privacy practice.

5. Based on the health information collected, BBBS may refuse, suspend or terminate a match; put in place precautionary measures to minimise an identified risk to health and safety; disclose information about a health condition to others; or take other appropriate action to mitigate any risk.

6. BBBS may also require participants to take additional steps to ensure the health and safety of program participants, including undertaking vaccinations, providing additional medical information or attending medical assessments.

7. Applicants will be advised of this policy at the time of assessment.

What do we need to know about your health?

8. To ensure the health and safety of all program participants, BBBS needs to know about anything that may impact on the health and safety of participants, including participants’ health conditions.

9. Therefore all participants are required to disclose information about health conditions that may be relevant to their role in the program. For further information about BBBS, please contact us.

10. Based on our experience we have identified that the following health information may be relevant to BBBS. Therefore, we require you to disclose this health information, as well as any other information you identify as relevant:

(a) Infectious diseases

An infectious disease is a disease that can spread directly or indirectly between one living thing to another. For example:

- HIV
- Measles
- Hepatitis
- Mumps
- Influenza
- Rheumatic fever
- Chicken pox
- Whooping cough
- German measles

(b) Psychiatric and psychological conditions

Including acquired brain injury, stroke, depression, intellectual disability and mental illness.

(c) Life threatening illnesses

Any potentially life threatening illness including those in remission, for example cancer and heart disease.

(d) Medical conditions

Any other medical condition, impairment or disability that may impact on your ability to safely be involved in BBBS. For example, epilepsy, back problems, diabetes, ADHD.
(e) Impact of medication

Any medication taken that may have impacts that are relevant to your role in BBBS.

(f) Allergies

(g) Alcohol and/or Drug Dependency

When are you required to provide your relevant health information?

11 You are required to disclose accurate current information about your health:
   - during the selection process; and
   - during the course of your involvement with BBBS.

12 You are required to provide information about any new health condition or a pre-existing condition that becomes relevant to your role as soon as practicable after you become aware of the condition or its relevance and at least prior to any further contact with your match.

13 Where BBBS is informed by a third party that a participant has a health condition, that may be relevant to their role then the participant will be asked about this condition and will be required to disclose if it is true and provide relevant details.

How will we handle your information?

14 We will collect and use personal and health information in accordance with the BBBS Privacy Policy.

15 BBBS recognises that a person’s health information may only be collected with that person’s consent and only if it is necessary for the functions and activities of BBBS.

16 Any health information that is collected will be kept in secure storage and the person that information relates to will have a right to access it.

17 The relevant health information obtained from applicants/participants will be used to:
   Assess suitability
   Establish matches
   Promote health and safety
   Promote the best interests of the child; and
   Protect the longevity of matches.

18 Health information is primarily sought to meet the requirements of occupational health and safety laws.

19 The health information collected may be disclosed to BBBS management, staff, medical practitioners, BBBS consultants, advisers or researchers and other program participants.

20 BBBS will not use or disclose the health information for any other purpose without consent.

What happens if you refuse to provide relevant health information?

21 If an applicant refuses to provide their relevant health information and/or undertake other reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of program participants, BBBS has the right to refuse to consider their application.

22 If it is discovered that an applicant knowingly did not disclose relevant health information during the assessment of their application, BBBS may refuse to consider their application for the program.

23 If a participant refuses to provide their relevant health information and/or undertake other reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of program participants, BBBS has the right to remove them from the program.

24 If it is discovered that a participant has knowingly failed to disclose relevant health information, BBBS may remove that participant from the program.
What might happen if you have a health condition that is relevant to the program?

25 If an applicant discloses relevant health information, BBBS will determine whether the duty to provide a healthy and safe program requires non-acceptance of them into the program.

26 In the event of disclosure of a short term health condition that poses a risk to the health and safety of BBBS participants, for example chicken pox or whooping cough, the match may be suspended by BBBS until such time as that person has recuperated and no longer poses a risk to health and safety. BBBS may require a medical certificate to be presented evidencing recuperation.

27 If a participant discloses a health condition of a long term nature, BBBS will determine whether the duty to provide a healthy and safe program requires removal of that participant from the program.

28 If the applicant is accepted into the program and/or the participant remains in the program, BBBS will determine whether the duty to provide a healthy and safe program requires:

(a) others to be informed of the relevant health condition (e.g. the intended match);

(b) others to be provided with information on the nature of the relevant health condition; and

(c) any precautions necessary to minimise any risk to health and safety to be implemented.

What other steps might be required of you to ensure the program is safe and healthy for all participants?

General steps that might become necessary

29 During the life of a participant’s involvement in BBBS, BBBS might require some or all participants to take other reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of all participants. Participants will be notified of steps required at the relevant time.

Medical testing and vaccinations

30 In addition, BBBS reserves the right to require medical testing or vaccinations of applicants or participants provided that the applicant/participant so consents. If there is no consent then BBBS:

(a) cannot and will not force them to be tested or vaccinated; but

(b) may refuse to consider their application or terminate their involvement in BBBS.

31 BBBS will only require medical testing or vaccinations in order to:

- Promote health and safety
- Assess suitability
- Establish matches
- Promote the best interests of the child; and
- Protect the longevity of matches.

32 BBBS will not use or disclose any test results or records of vaccination for any other purpose without consent.

Universal precautions for blood and bodily fluids

33 BBBS is committed to the health and safety of all participants and to the concept of universal precautions. Where required, information regarding universal precautions will be provided to the volunteer, parent/guardian or young person.

34 Universal precautions are a set of guidelines which have been developed to protect workers who are exposed to blood and other body fluids. The guidelines work on the presumption that all blood and body fluids are in fact infectious, and persons must follow the “rules” whenever in contact with them. The precautions involve hand washing immediately there is contact, the routine of wearing protective clothing and gloves, following infection control measures that are designed to place a barrier between potentially
infectious blood or body fluids and employees adherence to work practices, and procedures for the transport of infections materials.

35 Where there is a need to implement universal precautions, participants are required to discuss proposed match activities with their coordinator.