



LEARNING Buddies NETWORK

Empowering Kids through Reading & Math

Volunteer Manual

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1.0 Welcome to the Learning Buddies Network! | 3 |
| 2.0 Mission & Vision | 4 |
| 2.1 Why Are We Here? | 4 |
| 2.2 What Are Our Goals? | 4 |
| 3.0 General Volunteer Expectations | 5 |
| 3.1 Criminal Record Checks | 5 |
| 3.2 Induction and Training | 5 |
| 3.3 Insurance | 5 |
| 3.4 Resolving Problems | 5 |
| 3.6 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion | 6 |
| 4.0 The Learning Buddies Network Team | 7 |
| 4.1 Board of Directors | 7 |
| 4.2 Staff | 7 |
| 4.3 Volunteers | 8 |
| 5.0 Volunteer Guidelines & Policies | 9 |
| 5.1 Guidelines for Success | 9 |
| 5.2 Copyrighted Materials | 9 |
| 5.3 Communications and Social Media | 9 |
| 5.4 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy | 9 |
| 5.5 Attendance | 10 |
| 5.6 Resignation | 10 |
| 5.7 Continuous Supervision | 11 |
| 5.8 Disclosures | 11 |
| 5.9 Non-Discrimination | 12 |
| 5.10 Reference Letters | 12 |
| 5.11 Zero Tolerance Policy | 13 |
| 6.0 Abuse Policy and Procedure | 14 |
| 6.1 Policy | 14 |
| 6.2 Procedure | 14 |
| 7.0 Emergency/Crisis Policy and Procedure | 15 |
| 7.1 Policy | 15 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 7.2 Procedure | 15 |
| 7.3 Incident Report | 15 |
| 8.0 Advice from Current and Former Volunteers | 17 |
| 9.0 Directory | 18 |
| 9.1 Executive Director | 18 |
| 9.2 Operations Manager and Administrator | 18 |
| 9.3 Human Resources Manager | 18 |
| 9.4 Board President | 18 |
| Appendix 1: Inappropriate Communication & Power Imbalance | 19 |
| Policy | 19 |
| Procedure | 19 |
| Example Conditions | 19 |
| Discipline | 21 |
| While Volunteering With LBN | 21 |
| While No Longer Volunteering With LBN | 21 |
| Reporting Suspected Non-Compliance with this Policy | 21 |
| Additional Suggestions | 21 |
| Appendix 2: Abuse Policy and Procedures | 23 |
| Abuse Terminology | 23 |
| Disclosures | 24 |
| Confidentiality | 24 |
| Supplemental Abuse Information | 25 |

1.0 Welcome to the Learning Buddies Network!

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Learning Buddies Network. We are a volunteer-driven organization, and without you, our work would not be possible. I hope that you will learn from the duties of your volunteer opportunity and that you find the experience to be fulfilling, rewarding, and positive.

This is a great place to develop your interpersonal and leadership skills in numerous positions. Like you, I also started as a Volunteer in this organization. As a Mentor, I learned how to provide one-on-one support to a child. It was heartwarming to see how much my support was appreciated and the impact that it made on my little Buddy's self-esteem. As a Coordinator, I felt a sense of responsibility and agency when running my programs. As a Staff Member, I have moved into supportive roles to ensure all our Volunteers receive the same meaningful experience that I received. In all of my roles, I have learned about non-profit organizational structure and have sharpened my problem-solving skills. I have seen first-hand how supportive, welcoming, and inclusive the LBN community is.

This Manual aims to detail the essential policies that all LBN Volunteers are required to understand and follow. It is expected that all Volunteers have read and understood these policies. If you have questions about the material contained in this Manual, please feel free to contact me or any of our Staff Members.

I am excited to work with you to provide equitable literacy and numeracy support for those who need it most.

I am happy to welcome you to our team.

Sincerely,
Owen Fan
Executive Director

August 2024

2.0 Mission & Vision

“The Learning Buddies Network has provided me with a wealth of opportunities and personal development to grow as a leader. In the Executive Coordinator role, I learned strategies on how to collaborate with people of different personalities and cultivate an environment that ensured everyone, including Buddies, could thrive. The challenges provided by this role allowed me to further my critical thinking and problem-solving skills.”

2.1 Why Are We Here?

Learning Buddies Network (“LBN”) is dedicated to helping elementary school students develop essential literacy and math skills through free, one-on-one, after-school mentoring in a fun group setting. We reach children who otherwise would not have the help they need. Our goals are to enhance self-esteem through improvement in academic skills and to ignite a passion for learning in a safe and caring environment.

2.2 What Are Our Goals?

1. To provide free extracurricular tutoring to elementary school children who are struggling with basic academics;
2. To improve academic skills, self-esteem and attitude to learning in these children through teaching, one-on-one mentoring and group activities;
3. To provide young adults a meaningful and rewarding volunteer experience with an opportunity to act as a role model to children and develop leadership and communication skills.

3.0 General Volunteer Expectations

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas while helping others and meeting like-minded people! By volunteering with LBN, you will be making a positive contribution to community development in our area. Volunteers are vital to our work. With that, we expect all Volunteers to:

- Be responsible
- Complete their 'homework' and tasks for their roles
- Attend, participate, and engage in each session
- Adhere to our curriculum, policies, and the resources we have available
- Do not use cell phones when volunteering in front of Buddies

3.1 Criminal Record Checks

All LBN Volunteers who work directly in a program, whether it be as a Mentor or Coordinator, must complete a Criminal Record check. The record check is free of charge for Volunteers.

3.2 Induction and Training

It does not matter how much you already know, as there will always be opportunities to learn, and we have roles to suit every level of expertise. There will be an induction prepared and delivered by our Staff. This will include

- Information about LBN: our vision, mission and future plans
- The role of the Volunteer
- Introduction to other Volunteers and members of our network
- Training for Math/Reading LBN Mentors
- Training for Coordinators

3.3 Insurance

LBN has a valid insurance policy so that Volunteers are covered by public liability insurance. It covers the Volunteering activities you will be doing.

3.4 Resolving Problems

We hope that you will have a very enjoyable experience volunteering with us. However, if your role as a Volunteer does not meet your expectations or with the commitments we have made to you, **we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know.** Your team/program leader is trained to assist in solving problems and is always open to help you before the problem escalates. If you do not feel this will resolve things, you may speak to the Executive Director.

3.5 Feedback

You should also feel free to give us feedback at any time. We are always learning and want to make sure this is a valuable volunteering opportunity for you. You are always welcome to reach any of our Staff, including our Executive Director.

3.6 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

LBN is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equity and inclusion. When representing LBN as a Volunteer, we expect you to support our commitment to promoting equity.

4.0 The Learning Buddies Network Team

4.1 Board of Directors

- Responsible for guiding the overall direction of LBN.

4.2 Staff

Executive Director

- Responsible for overseeing all Staff and executing the vision of the Board of Directors. Reports to the Board of Directors.

Indigenous Program Director

- Responsible for managing all direct Indigenous program functions and operations including, but not limited to: curriculum design and development, training, resources, and partnership establishment. Oversees Indigenous Program Ambassadors and Coordinators. Reports to the Executive Director.

Indigenous Program Ambassadors

- Responsible for acting as the main point of contact and communication between LBN and their local Indigenous community. Facilitates student entry to the LBN programs. Reports to Indigenous Program Director.

Program Directors

- Responsible for managing all direct program functions including, but not limited to: curriculum design and development, training, resources, and facilitating Program Committee meetings. Reports to the Executive Director.

Operations Manager and Administrator

- Responsible for all operational, administrative, and promotional functions related to LBN. Reports to the Executive Director.

Human Resources Manager

- Responsible for all Volunteer recruitment, overseeing the recruitment committee, assisting with staff recruitment and retention, handling human resources matters, and supporting operational functions related to LBN. Reports to the Executive Director.

IT Consultants(s)

- Responsible for all Information Technology functions related to LBN, including maintenance of our Learning Management System and Registration System. Reports to the Executive Director.

Program Systems and Development Consultant(s)

- Responsible for assisting the Program Committee with technical support and the creation of new resources, and helping the Operations Manager with program resource support. Reports to the Operations Manager.

Teacher Liaison

- Responsible for overseeing the safety and welfare of program participants and providing educational support. Reports to the Executive Director and Program Directors.

4.3 Volunteers

Executive Coordinators

- Responsible for operating and supervising a program, as well as mentoring Program Coordinator(s) and Mentors.

Program Coordinators

- Responsible for supervising a program and mentoring Mentors.

Mentors

- Responsible for mentoring an individual student in our programs.

Specialized Volunteers

- Responsible for developing and collaborating on projects and initiatives related to one of five portfolios: communications, fundraising, recruitment and engagement, information technology, or program development.

Site/Teacher Sponsors

- Responsible for acting as the main point of contact and communication between LBN and the school/organization. Facilitates student entry to the LBN programs.

5.0 Volunteer Guidelines & Policies

5.1 Guidelines for Success

Each of the core Volunteer roles in the organization come with its own Guidelines for Success, all of which can be found on our Google Drives.

- Reading Program Coordinator and Executive Coordinator (In Virtual RB Coordinator Google Drive)
- Math Program Coordinator and Executive Coordinator (In Virtual MB Coordinator Google Drive)
- Reading Mentor (In RB Virtual Program Materials Google Drive → Mentor Documents)
- Math Mentor (In MB Virtual Program Materials Google Drive → Mentor Documents)

5.2 Copyrighted Materials

Materials, both digital and physical, used in LBN programs or provided by LBN are the property of LBN and cannot be copied, reproduced, altered, or used for any purpose outside of the LBN programs in any way.

5.3 Communications and Social Media

Executive Coordinators are responsible for communicating with parents during the sessions, with guidance from Staff. Volunteers must respect their boundaries and limitations as a Volunteer. Do not share personal contact information or participate in any social media networking with buddies/families. *For more information, refer to Appendix 1: Inappropriate Communication & Power Imbalance.*

5.4 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

The privacy of the Buddies is essential. All Volunteers must keep any and all information confidential at all times (both during and after your time at LBN) regarding any Buddies and their families, including but not limited to:

- Names
- Addresses
- Assessment results
- Educational and/or academic levels
- Any other information disclosed by Buddies and/or their families

You shall not share any report or assessment information with parents, teachers, or other individuals outside the Learning Buddies Network. Our assessments are used to guide our practice at LBN and support our program. They are not designed to inform school instruction. Therefore, we do not share details about the Buddy's progress with school teachers or parents other than general notes on improvement. Exceptions may be made only if approved by LBN Staff.

You must also keep confidential at all times (both during and after your time at LBN) all information in connection with LBN's networks, materials, resources, policies, and procedures.

5.5 Attendance

For Mentors:

- **A Volunteer is only allowed to be absent for 10% (rounded up) of the total sessions, provided that they follow the protocol set out below.** (Example: If there are 12 total sessions for the term, you are only allowed 1 excused absence). If you pass this limit, or you do not follow the protocol set out below, your position as a full-time Mentor will be on probation.
- **In unavoidable situations:**
 - You must notify your Program Coordinator as soon as possible (latest is 24h in advance).
 - It is your responsibility to find an on-call to cover your session.
 - Therefore you must post a message on slack to find an on-call with your **POD/PROGRAM NAME, SESSION DATE, and TIME.**
 - You must also post your session on the "On-Call Request" sheet, which will be shared with you at the beginning of the term and will be pinned to the on-call channel
 - If you are unable to find a replacement by the morning of your session, you must notify your Program Coordinator immediately.
 - **Any unexcused absence will put the Volunteer on probation. In looking out for what is best for our Buddies, repeated absences, even with good reason, will put your position at risk.**

5.6 Resignation

For Mentors:

- A written letter of resignation must be given at least 2 weeks before the resignation date, unless in the case of an emergency.
 - *If not given*, you will forfeit your Volunteer hours and will not receive a certificate.
- You must notify your Program Coordinator and the Human Resources Manager

of your resignation.

For Program Coordinators/Executive Coordinators:

- A written letter of resignation must be given at least 2 weeks before the resignation date, unless in the case of an emergency.
 - *If not given*, you will forfeit your Volunteer hours and will not receive a certificate.
- You must notify the Human Resources Manager of your resignation.

5.7 Continuous Supervision

- While in programs, the Mentor is responsible the entire time for their Buddy, including during all break times.
 - In-Person: Volunteers get credit for 2 hours total each session, 15 minutes set-up, tutoring session (1 hour 15 minutes), huddle (about 15 minutes) and online report (about 15 minutes).
 - Online: Volunteers get credit for 1.5 hours total each session, 15 minutes set-up, tutoring session (45 minutes), huddle (about 15 minutes) and online report (about 15 minutes).
 - Sometimes, there are exceptions to accommodate school/site availability. Staff/Coordinators will communicate this information.
- Mentor's full and undivided attention is to be on the Buddy.
- All Volunteers need to refrain from using phones and socializing with other Volunteers during the session. Time to connect with fellow Volunteers is before and after the session
- Buddies are to be released from the Mentor directly to the Parent or Daycare Provider. No changes in this arrangement are permitted unless the parent has communicated a change directly to LBN Staff either in writing or on their initial application form.

5.8 Disclosures

- Very rarely, although sometimes a buddy will disclose something worrisome to a Mentor
- Mentor acknowledges the information (repeats back without emotion to the Buddy)
- Calmly and as soon as possible reports the information to the Coordinator
- Coordinator shares info with Executive Coordinator and together (if possible) to then contact/phone the Site/Teacher Sponsor that day
 - Ask for direction from the Site/Teacher Sponsor
 - Complete a detailed Incident Report
 - Inform the Executive Director on the same day, asap.

5.9 Non-Discrimination

Members of LBN shall not discriminate against any other member or applicant because of race, ethnicity, citizenship, immigration status, religion, appearance, political affiliation or activities, age, sex, gender, gender expression, actual or perceived sexual orientation, or disability (including mental, physical, developmental or learning disabilities). To foster a safe environment free of discrimination, it is essential to treat everyone with respect and equality.

5.10 Reference Letters

If you are interested in asking us for a letter of reference and have completed at least one term of volunteering, please send an email to your Coordinator, and the staff member (e.g. Teacher Liaison, Staff Designate, or Operations Manager) you have been working with most closely. If we can provide a letter, we will ask you to send the following information to us, with our Human Resources Manager copied:

1. What has been your involvement(s) with LBN?
 2. How long and when did you volunteer with LBN?
 3. What are you applying to?
 4. What you would like your reference writer to speak to (e.g. ability to connect with a child, leadership, teamwork, or time management, as a few examples). The more information you share, the easier it will be for us to help write your letter.
- References and or reference letters shall only be provided at the end of the term to mentors who have completed at least one full term with the organization.
 - References and or reference letters shall only be given to mentors who have asked coordinators in advance with fair warning, prior to putting them down as a reference.
 - Fair warning within this policy constitutes a minimum of one week.
 - Coordinators have at least ten business days to process the demand of a reference and or reference letter.
 - References and or reference letters shall only be available for request for up to one year from the last date of the last term the volunteer was with us.

Please feel free to send along any additional information that you think would be helpful for the reference letter! Reach out to the Executive Director if you have any questions or concerns.

5.11 Zero Tolerance Policy

Definition of Zero Tolerance:

Zero tolerance refers to the strict prohibition of any behavior or action considered unacceptable in the context of working with children.

This policy is designed to foster a safe and supportive environment for children, prioritizing their well-being above all. All Staff and Volunteers are required to comply with this standard without exception.

The following are examples of behaviors that are strictly prohibited:

- Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual)
- Neglect
- Bullying or harassment
- Substance abuse
- Inappropriate touching
- Access to harmful materials
- Access to inappropriate materials
- Sharing personal information about children or their families
- Endangering safety
- Any form of discrimination
- Use of personal social media or messaging to communicate with children outside of approved channels

Violations of this policy may result in:

- Immediate suspension or termination
- Legal action
- Mandatory training or counseling

6.0 Abuse Policy and Procedure

6.1 Policy

As members of LBN, it is a right to expect a safe environment, free of any type of neglect and abuse. It is our legal duty to report any suspected abuse or neglect. LBN will provide training to Staff and Volunteers to ensure that any suspected abuse is dealt with correctly.

Every possible effort will be made to ensure the incidents reported are properly investigated and dealt with, to allow for a safe environment for Staff, Volunteers and Buddies.

All LBN Staff and Volunteers who encounter children have a duty to help and protect them from abuse or risk of abuse. *More information on abuse is available in Appendix 2: Abuse.*

- Reporting that a child is in need of protection.
- Notifying their supervisor that a report is being made.
- Creating a safe and caring environment.

6.2 Procedure

If a child approaches you about suspected abuse, ask for confirmation, reassure them, and calmly note down the details. If any neglect or abuse is suspected, please reach out immediately to either your Teacher Liaison, Executive Coordinator, or Program Coordinator at an appropriate time during the session. Any Volunteer suspected of neglect or abuse can be suspended from their position, pending investigation.

7.0 Emergency/Crisis Policy and Procedure

7.1 Policy

This policy is for reporting *emergency/crisis situations* that occur at LBN, or any activity sponsored by LBN. This section should not be considered a substitute for informed decisions and common sense when an emergency occurs.

7.2 Procedure

Once a situation has been judged as an *emergency/crisis situation*, Staff and Volunteers must immediately communicate the matter to their supervisor. The reporting procedure is as follows:

- 1) **Volunteers** - Must immediately report all incidents, whatever their magnitude, to their Teacher Liaison for assessment. If a crisis has been handled and corrective action has been taken, the Volunteer must begin completing an Incident Report.
- 2) **Staff** - Assist Volunteers in handling the crisis situation, then immediately report all incidents, whatever their magnitude, to their Executive Director for assessment. Assist Volunteers in completing the Incident Report.
- 3) **Executive Director** - Ensure the crisis situation is dealt with and the Incident Report is completed and submitted to the President. If the situation may have legal ramifications for the LBN, notify the President immediately (before completion of the Incident Report). The Executive Director is the key “front line” Staff to deal with *emergency/crisis situations*. It is therefore their responsibility to initiate the internal communication process.

7.3 Incident Report

The [Incident Report Form](#) (click to access) is to be completed and submitted to the Executive Director within 24 hours of the onset of the incident. The Executive Director is responsible for emailing the Incident Report to the President, who will, in turn, share it with the LBN Board of Directors or the Board Executive Committee if necessary. The report is to be submitted for any *emergency/crisis situations* as outlined below or for any other incidents that, in the judgment of the person in charge, require reporting.

Examples of Emergency/Crisis Situations:

- If intruders cause site security concerns or are engaging the Volunteers, Staff or

Buddies in a way that makes anyone uncomfortable;

- If a Buddy requires medical aid;
- Issues with noted allergies where mistakes have been made (i.e. A child is given food that he is allergic to);
- A failure to properly “check out” a child at the end of a program;
- If a Buddy has to be sent home or a parent is contacted about their child’s behaviour;
- Disclosure of suspected abuse;
- If an incident happens that may require explaining in the future;
- Any issue related to bullying;
- Anything out of the ordinary that causes damage or safety concerns

As a guiding principle, err on the side of caution and fill out an incident report for anything that you think would be helpful to bring to the attention of LBN Staff.

8.0 Advice from Current and Former Volunteers

We are extremely excited for you to step into your role with us! Your time will be filled with not only laughter and joy, but also countless opportunities for personal and professional growth and development. As you embark on this journey, take a moment to read some advice provided by current and former Volunteers of LBN.

Mentors:

“When I first started working at LBN as a Mentor, I realized what a great community it was! I was extremely supported and the Program Coordinator I worked with was always willing to help and give advice whenever needed. Working as a Mentor not only allowed me to work directly with children and teach them math and reading skills, but I was also able to make many new friends with the fellow Mentors/Coordinators that I volunteered with.”

Coordinators:

“Being an Executive Coordinator has truly laid the foundation for success in my roles and involvements outside of LBN. This role can be challenging at times, but the wealth of experience and knowledge gained is insurmountable. As you begin the term, my biggest piece of advice is to get to know your Mentors! Take advantage of the social and many pre-sessions to learn more about your Mentors’ strengths and areas for support, as well as their genuine interests outside of LBN! By doing this, the programs I operated became significantly more enjoyable and productive simply because I could connect Mentors with the necessary support and resources, but additionally cultivated a vibrant, tight-knit community. And as always, ask for help when you need it!”

9.0 Directory

9.1 Executive Director

Owen Fan, owen@learningbuddiesnetwork.com

9.2 Operations Manager and Administrator

Eric Chung, eric@learningbuddiesnetwork.com

9.3 Human Resources Manager

Julia Law, julia@learningbuddiesnetwork.com

9.4 Board President

Alisa Lipson, alisa.lipson@learningbuddiesnetwork.com

Appendix 1: Inappropriate Communication & Power Imbalance

Policy

It is inappropriate to exchange contact information of any kind, including but not limited to, physical mail or email addresses, social media contact information, and phone numbers, with Buddies. Buddies may write to Staff, if they wish, using info@learningbuddiesnetwork.com or our physical mail address.

Procedure

If Buddies attempt to contact you outside of LBN Programs (e.g. by phone, personal email, Facebook), you may:

- Choose to not respond at all, *or*
- Direct them to send you a message via the Operations Manager, ceasing all communication with them thereafter
 - If possible, carbon copy (CC) your supervisor or a senior Staff to that email/electronic communication.
 - If not possible, record the communication in some fashion (including when the Buddy contacted you, how and what was said) and pass it along to your supervisor or a senior Staff currently volunteering/working at LBN, should it happen after your time with LBN.

Examples of methods of contact that are considered inappropriate include but are not limited to:

- By Phone
- On Chat Rooms
- Facebook and other similar social media programs or apps
- Online video games

In situations such as LBN programs, there is a *real or perceived power imbalance* between Buddies and Volunteers/Staff. Developing a relationship outside of LBN Programs, even when a Buddy and Staff are close in age, is inappropriate.

Example Conditions

In some cases, there could be extenuating circumstances that seem to make this policy ambiguous. Below is a list of examples to help you understand how this policy applies in non-standard situations.

Example 1:

Two individuals meet at LBN (one as a Volunteer/Staff and one as a Buddy) and then re-meet because they attend the same school, play on the same sports team, or another similar scenario. This would be less inappropriate because this relationship could have developed even if the two had never met at LBN. Because the two individuals met while there was a power imbalance, the Volunteer/Staff should be aware that they may be putting themselves in a compromised position if an allegation of an inappropriate relationship is made against them.

Example 2:

If two individuals meet while one is a Buddy and the other is a Staff, and later the Buddy becomes a Volunteer, that Staff should still be aware that this may be an inappropriate relationship. Because the two individuals met while there was a power imbalance, the Staff should be aware that they may be putting themselves in a compromised position if an allegation of an inappropriate relationship is made against them.

Example 3:

When two individuals who knew each other as Buddy and Volunteer/Staff coincidentally re-meet each other years later once both are of legal age. There is less of an issue if the two are meeting by chance through a non-LBN Program related function (i.e. you both end up being co-workers at another job), because both are of legal age and their meeting was not solely because of their time spent at LBN. However, Volunteer/Staff should be aware that they may be putting themselves in a compromised position if an allegation of an inappropriate relationship is made against them. This example *does not cover* an instance where a Volunteer/Staff and Buddy meet through LBN Programs, and the Volunteer/Staff waits a few years before contacting that Buddy.

For situations that arise that do not resemble any of the examples named above, ask yourself two questions:

1. Would the two people in question have met were it not for their meeting at LBN?
 - **If Yes**, they could have met, then the Volunteer/Staff should be aware that they still may be putting themselves in a compromised position if an allegation of an inappropriate relationship is made against them.
 - **If No**, then the policy of not contacting Buddies outside of LBN Programs as described above is clear.
2. Was there a power imbalance between the two people in question either when

they met, or when their relationship progressed?

- The only situation relevant to an LBN Programs context where a relationship would exist between two people without there being a power imbalance when the two people met or when their relationship progressed would be if two people were in a relationship prior to them ever attending LBN Programs.

Discipline

While Volunteering With LBN

A failure to follow this important policy while volunteering at LBN can result in a range of disciplinary measures up to and including termination. It may also limit our ability to provide a reference or, where one is provided, may diminish the quality of that reference, particularly if the job you are applying for is one where you would interact with children & youth, and/or vulnerable populations. A failure to comply may also limit your ability to work or volunteer with LBN in the future.

While No Longer Volunteering With LBN

While not volunteering or working at LBN (either between terms or no longer working at or volunteering for LBN), LBN does not have any jurisdiction to discipline. However, we *strongly urge you* to continue to follow this policy as failing to do so puts you, LBN's Buddies & families, and LBN in a compromised position. As stated above, it can also affect our ability to provide a quality reference, and your ability to work or volunteer with LBN in the future.

Reporting Suspected Non-Compliance with this Policy

In some cases, attempts to contact children & youth outside of LBN Programs can be for improper and illegal reasons. From an outsider's perspective, it is difficult to assess; however, failing to report suspected non-compliance with this policy does not help the parties involved. If you have reason to believe that a Volunteer is failing to comply with this policy (knowingly or unknowingly), please contact your supervisor so that it can be addressed; if the situation occurs while you are no longer volunteering with LBN, please pass it along to a senior Staff currently employed by LBN. Depending on the circumstances, failure to report that someone is in non-compliance with this policy may call into question your own commitment to this important safety measure.

Additional Suggestions

Because working with youth is one where role-modelling is paramount, we strongly

encourage Volunteers to either make their social media profiles private and/or strongly consider whether the content that they are publishing online is something that they would feel comfortable discussing with a Buddy's family and with our LBN Staff. If the material does not pass that test, you may want to not publish it and/or make sure that your privacy settings are high.

Appendix 2: Abuse Policy and Procedures

Abuse Terminology

- Abuse is defined as an action, behaviour or speech which may result in physical, psychological, emotional, financial, or sexual harm, a violation of rights, or neglect.
- Please see the following pages for more comprehensive definitions:
 - A child or young person is someone under the age of 18 years of age.
 - A child in need of protection as defined by the Child, Family & Community Services is: any child or young person who has been placed at risk through something a person has done to them or something a person is failing to do for them. This includes any form of physical harm, emotional deprivation, sexual mistreatment or neglect which can result in injury or psychological damage to a child.
 - There are many different forms of abuse and a child may be subjected to more than one form.
 - **Physical abuse** may consist of just one incident or it may happen repeatedly. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person including deliberately causing ill health to a child or young person.
 - **Emotional abuse** involves harming a child's sense of self. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in, or place a child at risk of, serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental health problems. For example: emotional abuse may include verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, exploitation, or routinely making unreasonable demands. It also includes terrorizing a child or exposing them to family violence. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.
 - **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children and vulnerable adults in prostitution or pornography.
 - **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's or young person's basic needs for his or her physical or emotional development and well-being such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or not being responsive to a child's or young person's

basic emotional needs.

Disclosures

It is possible that sometime during your work at LBN, a Buddy may tell you about the abuse he/she/they is suffering at home or elsewhere. There are some steps that must be followed. For the explanation below, in the absence of being able to speak directly to the Executive Director, speak to your program's Teacher Liaison.

1. We are legally obligated to report any suspected abuse to the Ministry of Social Services (Zenith 1234).
2. If a Buddy asks you to promise not to repeat what they are about to tell you, inform them that there are some situations that you would have to report to authorities or the Executive Director (i.e. if you found out someone was being hurt or was going to be hurt). You cannot promise to keep a secret.
3. Listen to the Buddy and be supportive. Do not start questioning or investigating the circumstances, this is best left to specially trained social workers. Be careful not to appear shocked or upset in a way that the child may feel embarrassed or ashamed to continue the conversation.
4. As soon as possible, make written notes of what you were told or heard. Keep these notes in a secure location until you can pass them on to the Executive Director or authorities. Where possible, include direct quotes from the child.
5. Immediately inform the Executive Director and complete a detailed Incident Report including the Buddy's name, address, age and incident particulars.
6. The Executive Director is to immediately notify Social Services by calling 1 800 663-9122 (Zenith 1234).
7. Social Services will propose/provide an appropriate course of action to be followed.

Confidentiality

It is crucial that any information that is disclosed to you by a Buddy remains confidential. As outlined above, there will be a process for communicating the information you have heard to the appropriate authorities. Discussing the incident with other Staff (other than the Executive Director) is a violation of that child's privacy and will not assist the situation. This goes beyond the content of what the child said. It also includes discussing whether there was a disclosure or not.

Supplemental Abuse Information

What is Abuse?

Child abuse occurs with alarming frequency. As public awareness of the subject has grown, so have the numbers of reported and confirmed cases. The following definitions are adapted from B.C.'s child protection legislation, the Child, Family and Community Service Act.

Physical Abuse: is any physical force or action that results, or could result, in injury to a child. It's stronger than what would be considered responsible discipline.

Sexual Abuse: is the use of a child for sexual gratification. It includes sexual touching as well as non-touching abuse, such as making a child watch sexual acts.

Emotional Abuse: is a pattern of destructive behavior or verbal attacks by an adult on a child. It can include rejecting, terrorizing, ignoring, isolation, exploiting or corrupting a child.

Neglect: is a failure to provide for a child's basic needs: food, clothing, adequate shelter, supervision and medical care. Neglect is the form of abuse most frequently reported to the Ministry of Children and Families.

It is Our Legal Duty to Report

If you think a child is being abused, you have a legal duty to report the situation. Dial 0 and ask the operator for Zenith 1234. If needed, ministry services will be provided for the child and family.

When to Suspect Abuse

Abused and neglected children almost always show signs of their suffering. Some of the most common signs are listed below.

Remember, these are warning signs. They don't necessarily mean abuse is happening. But the more you see, the more concerned you should be.

Warning Signs:

- Unexplained bruises, especially on the face, lower back, thighs or upper arms
- Unexplained bruises on an infant
- Different coloured bruises, indicating they're at different stages of healing
- Unexplained fractures

- Constant complaints, such as sore throats or stomach aches that have no medical explanation
- Lack of proper hygiene
- Clothing inappropriate to weather conditions
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear
- Irritation, bruising, bleeding, pain or itching near genitals or anus
- Bruises on breast, buttocks or thighs
- Sudden onset of nightmares, bedwetting, and/or fear of the dark
- Sudden change in attitude towards someone previously liked or trusted
- Expressing sexual knowledge not usual for their age in their language, behavior or play
- Becoming anxious and fearful after being friendly and outgoing

Remember: these are warning signs. They don't necessarily mean abuse is happening. But, especially where one or more signs are noticed in the same child, there's cause for concern.

When a Child Comes to You

Sometimes, a child who is being abused will tell an adult. If this happens to you:

- Stay calm
- Listen to them
- Let them know you believe them
- Reassure them
- Tell them you're sorry it happened and let them know it's not their fault
- Don't promise to keep it a secret
- Don't say everything will be fine now. It may take a lot of time before everything is fine again

If You Suspect Abuse is Taking Place

Call the Helpline for Children by dialing 0 and asking the operator for Zenith 1234. The Helpline operates 24 hours a day. There's no charge for the call. The person you talk to will be a child protection safety worker.

What the Social Worker Will Ask You

When you report suspected abuse, the social worker will ask you about:

- The child's age, name and location
- Any immediate concerns for the child's safety
- Why you believe the child needs protection

- Any statements the child has made
- The child's parents and other family members
- The alleged offenders
- Any other children such as siblings who may be involved or at risk
- Any previous incidents or concerns for the child
- Any other relevant information such as the child's language or special needs

Don't wait until you have all this information before calling. Just tell the social worker as much as you know. They'll also ask for your name, address and phone number and how you know the child. Your name will be kept confidential.

After You Make a Report

If it appears the child may, indeed, need protection, a child protection social worker will start an investigation. This involves seeing and talking to the child and people who know the child, such as their parents, extended family, teacher, family doctor or child care worker.

Depending on the kind of abuse or neglect involved, the social worker may contact other agencies such as the police, the Superintendent of Schools, or the local Medical Health Officer.

If the child is aboriginal, their band or community will also be involved. Or, the information may be turned over to an aboriginal child welfare agency.

How Children are Protected

When an Investigation finds that a child needs protection, the social worker will take whatever steps are most appropriate and least disruptive to the child. Children are only removed from their homes when they're in immediate danger and nothing less disruptive can protect them.

When Children are Removed from their Homes

Whenever a child is taken away from their family for their own protection, a court process starts. A Family Court judge hears evidence from all sides and makes the final decision about who the child will live with, and under what conditions.

Children who cannot safely stay with family members or friends go to foster homes or care facilities that can meet their needs.