

Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County Program Policy and Procedures

Responsibilities of Mentors, Mentees, and Parents

Mentor Eligibility Requirements

- Must be at least 18 years of age. Age 16 and up can mentor under the guide of their parents to be reviewed quarterly with the minor and the parents.
- Must reside in Pennington County
- Be willing to comply with all Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County program policies and procedures.
- Agree to a one-year commitment to the program with a minimum of four hours per month.
- Be willing to communicate with their Little weekly either by phone, in person, or by e-mail where applicable.
- Complete the application and screening process.
- Be willing to communicate with the LBLS Coordinator monthly and submit monthly meeting and activity logs.
- Have access to an automobile or reliable transportation.
- Have a current driver's license, auto insurance, and good driving record.
- Never to have been convicted, accused, arrested, or charged with child abuse or molestation. Persons convicted of a felony not relating to child endangerment will be reviewed on a case-by-case situation.
- Not be a user of illicit drugs.
- Not use alcohol or controlled substances in an excessive or inappropriate manner.

- Not be currently in treatment for substance abuse. If a substance abuse problem has occurred in the past, the applicant must have completed a non-addictive period of at least 3 years.
- Not have falsified information during the course of the screening process.

Little Eligibility Requirements

- Child at time of application must be between the ages of 4-14.
- Child must reside in Pennington County.
- Have a desire to work with Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County and be willing to abide by LBLS program policies and procedures.
- Be able to obtain parental/guardian permission and ongoing support for participation in the program.
- Agree to a one-year commitment to the program.
- Commit to spending a minimum of 4 hours per month with their mentor.
- Be willing to communicate with the mentor weekly.
- Complete screening and application procedure.
- Be willing to communicate with the program Coordinator and discuss monthly meeting and activity information.

Overnight Visits and Out-of-Town Travel Policy

For the first 6 months of the match, out of town travel and over night visits are prohibited. After 6 months if an activity arises that would require out of town travel the parents/guardian of the Little must sign a permission slip obtained from the Coordinator.

After a period of one year over night visits can be approved by the parents/guardian writing and filling out a permission slip stipulating destination, names and location being traveled to, and permission for medical treatment in the case of a medical emergency. The form must be signed off by the parents/guardians of the Little and discussed with the Coordinator. After 18 months of the match going successfully over night visits and out of town travel can be approved through only the parents and there would be no need for the coordinator to approve at that point.

For any admissible out of town travel during 6 months and 1 year the mentor must write out or type a detailed itinerary of the trip and provide the following information to the parents: Destination, phone numbers, time of departure and arrival at locations, and expected time of return. The form must be signed off by the parents and a copy must be presented to the Coordinator.

Confidentiality & Mandatory Reporting Policy

It is the policy of the Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County to protect the confidentiality of its participants and their families. With the exception of the limitations listed below, program staff will only share information about mentors, mentees, and their families with other LBLS Staff and the Advisory Board. Further, all prospective mentors, mentees, and parents/ guardians should be informed of the scope and limitations of confidentiality by program staff. Additionally, mentors are required to keep information about their mentee and his/her family confidential.

In order for Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County to provide a responsible and professional service to participants, it is necessary to ask mentors, Little's, parents/guardians, and other outside sources to divulge extensive personal information about the prospective participants and their families, such as:

- Information gained from mentors and Little's, written or otherwise, about themselves and/or their families, in application to and during program participation
- Participant's names and images gained from participants themselves, program meetings, training sessions, and other events
- Information gained about participants from outside sources including confidential references, school staff, employers

Records are, therefore, considered the property of the agency, not the agency workers, and are not available for review by mentors, Little's, or parents/guardians.

Limits of Confidentiality

Information from mentor and Little records may be shared with individuals or organizations as specified below under the following conditions:

- Information may be gathered about program participants and shared with other participants, individuals, or organizations

only upon receipt of signed “release” forms from mentors, mentees, or parents/guardians.

- Identifying information (including names, photographs, videos, etc.) of program participants may be used in agency publications or promotional materials only upon written consent of the mentor, Little, and/or parent/guardian.
- Information may only be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts pursuant to a valid and enforceable subpoena.
- Information may be provided to legal counsel in the event of litigation or potential litigation involving the agency. Such information is considered privileged information, and its confidentiality is protected by law.
- If program staff receives information at any point in the match process that a volunteer is using illegal substances, has a criminal history of any kind, or is inappropriately using alcohol or other controlled substances, the information will be shared with the parent and they will have the option to reject the prospective mentor or close the existing match.
- At the time a mentor or Little is considered as a match candidate, information is shared between the prospective match parties. However, the full identity of the prospective match mate shall not be revealed at this stage. Names and addresses are shared with match mates only after the involved parties have met and agree to be formally matched. Each party shall have the right to refuse the proposed match based on the anonymous information provided to them. The information to be shared may include:
 - *Mentors*: age, sex, race, religion, interests, hobbies, employment, marriage or family status, sexual preference, living situation, reasons for applying to the program, and a summary of why the individual was chosen for the particular match. Results of driving records and criminal histories may also be shared.
 - *Little's*: age, sex, race, religion, interests, hobbies, family situation, living situation, a summary of the client needs assessment, and expectations for match participation.

Mandatory Abuse Reporting

It is the policy of the Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County that all staff, mentors, and other representatives of the program must report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect of agency clients or program participants immediately. All such suspected reports must be made to appropriate state and/or local authorities. Program staff must follow the mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect procedure.

All employees, volunteers, and mentors of the Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County are required to undergo training as to what constitutes child abuse and neglect, what the state statutes are, and how to properly report such cases.

Any staff, volunteers, or mentors accused of child abuse or neglect will be investigated by the agency. Contact with program youth will be restricted or constrained and/or the person in question suspended from employment or program participation per the decision of the Coordinator and Advisory Board until such investigation is concluded.

If an allegation is brought forward about a mentor the match will be suspended until the allegation can be investigated. The allegation will be brought to law enforcement to be investigated and will be followed up by the Coordinator. Proper steps will be taken to ensure the safety of the children we serve.

Violations of Confidentiality

A known violation of the agency policy on confidentiality by a program participant may result in a written warning or disciplinary action such as suspension or termination from the program.

Transportation Policy

It is the policy of the LBLS to allow mentors to transport mentees in their own private vehicles. The Coordinator must ensure that all mentors meet the following criteria prior to transporting the mentee:

- All mentors must own a car or have access to reliable insured transportation; all safety equipment including blinkers, lights, brake and back-up lights, seat belts, tires, and brakes must be in good operating condition.
- All mentors must possess a valid driver's license and present proof of auto insurance; a record of insurance will be

maintained in the mentor's file and will be updated on an annual basis.

- LBLS requires that mentors obey all traffic laws, and use seat belts and headlights at all times.
- Mentors must also avoid taking medication or using any other substances that might impair their ability to drive.
- If an accident occurs while the mentor is engaged in mentoring, it should be reported to law enforcement and the coordinator promptly.

If any of the above policy is not followed, the mentor will not be allowed to transport the Little in a private automobile.

Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy

It is the policy of the Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County to prohibit and discourage the use of drugs, alcohol, and firearms. Little's and mentors are prohibited from using drugs or alcohol or possessing firearms while engaged in the mentoring relationship. Any suspected violations should be reported to the program coordinator.

Alcoholic Beverages: No participant of Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County will possess or consume beer, wine, or other alcoholic beverages while actively engaged or prior to actively engaging in mentoring, nor shall any participant endorse the use of alcohol. Mentors and Little's may go to a location where minors are allowed and alcohol is served provided that the mentor and youth do not consume any alcohol.

Drugs: No participant of Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County will manufacture, possess, distribute, or use any illegal substance while engaged in mentoring or otherwise.

Tobacco: The intent of Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County is to create a smoke- and tobacco-free environment. To that end, smoking and the use of all tobacco products is prohibited on the premises of Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County and those involved with the program must refrain from the use of such products while engaged in mentoring. The use of tobacco products includes but is not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, e-cigarette's, vaping, or other substances that contain tobacco.

Weapons, Firearms, and Other Dangerous Materials: The possession or use of firearms, firecrackers, explosives, toxic or dangerous chemicals, or other lethal weapons, equipment, or material while participating in mentoring activities is strictly prohibited.

Any violation of this policy will result in the immediate suspension and/or termination of the mentoring relationship. In addition, violations of this policy may result in notification being given to legal authorities that may result in arrest or legal action, and may be punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.

Gift-Giving Policy

Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County does not encourage gift giving. LBLS doesn't want mentoring to be a financial hardship to our mentors. If a mentor chooses to purchase a gift for their Little's birthday or holiday that is up to the mentor and their wishes.

Social Media

Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County asks that no connections be made on any form of social media. This would include becoming 'friends', 'following', messaging, or anything similar. We also discourage posting pictures of your match on social media.

Unacceptable Behavior Policy

It is the policy of the Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County that unacceptable behaviors will not be tolerated on the part of mentors or Little's while participating in the program. This policy is in addition to behavioral requirements stipulated in other policies or procedures. This policy in no way is intended to replace or take precedence over other policies or procedures including, but not limited to, the following:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Transportation Policy
- Overnight Visits and Out-of-Town Travel Policy
- Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy

A number of behaviors are regarded as incompatible with Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County goals, values, and program standards and therefore are considered unacceptable and prohibited while participants are engaged in mentoring activities:

- Unwelcome physical contact, such as inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, punching, and physical assault
- Unwelcome physical, verbal, visual, or behavioral mannerisms or conduct that denigrates, shows hostility, or aversion toward any individual
- Demeaning or exploitive behavior of either a sexual or nonsexual nature, including threats of such behavior
- Display of demeaning, suggestive, or pornographic material
- Known sexual abuse or neglect of a child
- Denigration, public or private, of any mentee parent/ guardian or family member

(Denigration is defined as: to speak damagingly of; criticize in a derogatory manner; sully; defame)

- Denigration, public or private, of political or religious institutions or their leaders
- Intentional violation of any local, state, or federal law
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Possession of illegal substances

Any unacceptable behavior, as specified but not limited to the above, will result in a warning and/or disciplinary action including suspension or termination from participation in the mentoring program.

Closure Policy

It is the policy of Little Brother/Little Sister of Pennington County that all mentors and Little's must participate in closure procedures when their match ends. Closure is defined as the ending of a formal match relationship regardless of the circumstances of the match ending or whether they intend to have future contact informally beyond the match duration. While no party is expected to continue the relationship beyond the formal end

of a match, matches may continue in the program beyond the contract period and receive ongoing support and supervision.

Closure can occur for any number of reasons, including the contracted match duration has ended, one or both participants do not want to continue the match, there are changes in life circumstances in one or both of the match partner's lives, or an individual no longer meets the requirements for program participation. Hence, the match may end at the discretion of the mentor, mentee, parent/guardian, and/or Program Coordinator. It is left to the discretion of the Program Coordinator whether an individual will be reassigned to another match in the future based upon past participation performance and current goals and needs of the program.

Future contact will be at the mutual and informal agreement of the mentor, the Little, and parent/guardian. If future contact is agreed upon, LBLS will not be responsible for monitoring and supporting the match after the match has ended. The Coordinator will verbally and in writing inform all parties — the mentor, Little, and parent/guardian — that the formal match has ended and that LBLS will not be liable for any incidents that occur after the match has closed.

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