

LITERACY BUDDIES®

IT'S THE WRITE THING TO DO

Big Buddy Information



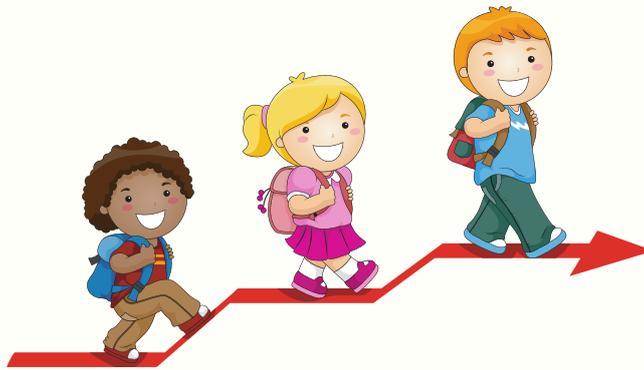
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**REALISING CHILDREN'S POTENTIAL
THROUGH EDUCATION**

Why Literacy Buddies®?

Support that counts

Multiple studies in Australia have demonstrated an unacceptable link between the socio-economic status of students and their educational outcomes. One in three children in Australia's most disadvantaged communities start school developmentally vulnerable and they continue to fall behind as they progress through school. We want to change this and we know we cannot do it alone.



Ardoch partners schools with workplace volunteer groups through Literacy Buddies® to build aspirations, enhance learning outcomes and increase the confidence of children and young people living in disadvantaged communities.

Ardoch's Literacy Buddies® program matches classes of school students (Little Buddies) with workplace volunteers (Big Buddies). The Buddies exchange 6 letters each throughout the school year. External research found that Literacy Buddies® programs that exchanged six or more letters had a higher impact on students' development. There are also two visits, one at the school and one at the workplace. The program gives the children a real-life context in which to practice their writing and composition skills. It also aims to build the aspirations of the children by bringing them into contact with successful working role models in a range of professions and jobs.



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Child Safety

Ardoch Child Safety Commitment

Ardoch is committed to protecting children's and young people's right to safety and well-being. We know children have a right to be kept safe at all times, so we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse. We know that some children are more vulnerable than others. That's why we actively promote the safety and well-being of children and young people who:

- are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- have a disability
- identify as LGBTQIA+

Everyone who works with or represents Ardoch is responsible for ensuring that children are safe, feel safe, and are involved in decisions that affect their lives.

Child safety and our programs

All staff and volunteers working at Ardoch must legally hold a current Working With Children Check before commencing work with children. In addition, Ardoch requires all our staff and volunteers to have a police check. Big Buddies must also complete training in child safety prior to beginning the program.

All communication between the Buddies is screened at Ardoch. We redact and/or follow up on any sensitive content before passing on the exchanges to ensure the safety of all participants.

Program Structure

Compliance

After signing up (click [here](#) to register), all Big Buddies need to complete four compliance steps in order to be program ready:

1. Have a valid Working With Children Check/Blue card which is linked to Ardoch
2. Apply for a [police check through Ardoch](#) (Ardoch will pay for the check)
3. Provide evidence of full vaccination or a medical exemption
4. Complete an online module on child safety through the Ardoch website

Please prioritise getting your Working With Children Check/Blue Card as these can take several weeks to process! State specific instructions on applying for the checks are available, please click on the relevant state: [VIC](#), [NSW](#), [QLD](#), [WA](#).

If you have any issues or questions, please get in touch and we can help you with your application.



Ready to begin!

All volunteers **MUST** have completed the compliance steps before program can start due to our child safety requirement.

Once we have enough fully compliant Big Buddies to match with the class of Little Buddies, we can begin the letter exchanges!

Remember your Workplace Coordinator is your main point of contact for all things relating to the Literacy Buddies® program!

For future reference, all information packs can be found at this link:

<https://www.ardoch.org.au/literacy-buddies-resources/>



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Program Structure

Exchanges

- Each group writes six letters over the course of the year, so 12 exchanges in total
- The Little Buddies will start first with an introductory letter, and then the Big Buddies will respond.
- You will be notified by your Workplace Coordinator when there are letters. Please inform your Workplace Coordinator if you cannot write your letter.
- Big Buddies have 7 days to write their responses. Please try keep to the schedule so we don't delay the program!
- Letters will be received and sent through SharePoint to speed up the exchange. We do however print out and post letters to the school so that the Little Buddies have a physical copy to keep.
- All letters/blogs are screened at Ardoch to ensure child safety before being passed on.
- To help with writing, there is a pack of resources with colourful templates and prompts that you might like to use in your letters which can be found [here](#).

Visits

- The first visit happens mid-program. The Big Buddies visit the school for about 90 minutes to meet their Little Buddies for the first time! Ardoch will provide a light morning/afternoon tea, delivered to the school.
- Virtual visits are also an option in case circumstances do not allow for in person incursions.
- For either visit type, there will be an agenda detailing the activities and day schedule so you know where to go and what to expect.
- The second visit happens towards the end of the program where the Little Buddies visit the Big Buddies at their workplace and is an exciting conclusion to the program! This visit usually involves a tour and some activities where you can spend time catching up with your Little Buddies.
- Please inform your Workplace Coordinator if you are not able to attend the visits.

Evaluation

- One of Ardoch's core values is to collect and analyse data to ensure that our work and decisions are informed by robust evidence.
- After the program, we will send an online survey to you and all the Big Buddies to hear about your program experience as your feedback is valuable to us



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Letter example

Here is an example of a letter a Little Buddy wrote to their Big Buddy - imagine how you might write a reply!



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Contacts

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