



# LITERACY BUDDIES®

IT'S THE WRITE THING TO DO

## Teacher Information



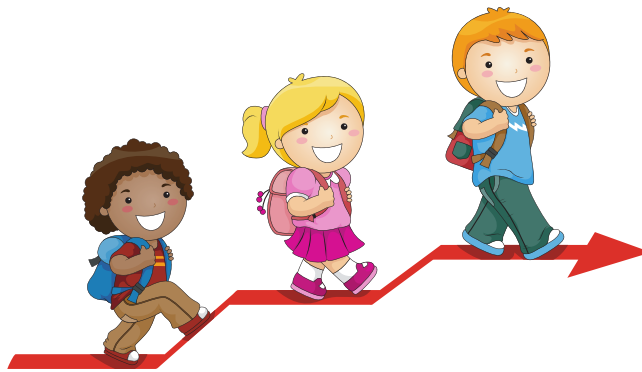
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# Why Literacy Buddies®?

## 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.

# Child Safety - for Little Buddies

This is our child safety commitment for children. Please make this available to your students, as children deserve to know their rights regarding their own safety.

## Ardoch Child Safety Commitment

- We want you to feel safe.
- We want ALL children from all cultures to feel safe and happy, including if you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, have a disability or identify as LGBTIQ+.
- We want you to tell us if you, or another child, don't feel safe so we can help you.
- We also want you to tell us or your teacher if you don't feel safe in an Ardoch program.
- We want you to tell us what you like and don't like about the activities Ardoch does with you or your class, so that we can make them even better.



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# Program Structure

## Pre-program

Before the program can begin, we need a few steps from you:

- teacher registration form
- a class list
- content permission form for each student (available digitally, or as a pdf)

Please get these back to us quickly so we can match you up with a group of workplace Big Buddies!

All the links and resources can also be found here:

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



## Exchanges

- there are 6 exchange rounds; each group of Buddies will write 6 letters (12 letters total)
- The Little Buddies will start writing first with an introductory letter
- Letters are handwritten, but will be scanned and uploaded to speed up the program. Letters from the Big Buddies will be printed out and posted to the school so the Little Buddies have a physical copy to keep.
- Every letter is screened at Ardoch by trained staff and volunteers to ensure child safety



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# Program Structure

## Visits

- The first visit happens mid-program. The Big Buddies visit the school for about 90 minutes. 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. We can loan webcams to help with audio and visual quality if desired.
- For either visit type, we will provide you with an agenda that includes suggested activities to run.
- The second visit happens towards the end of the program where the Little Buddies visit the Big Buddies at their workplace.
- The school will need to book a bus for the excursion, Ardoch will reimburse you for this cost.
- The workplace provides a morning tea - we'll ask you for any Little Buddy dietary requirements prior to the visit!



## 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.
- It's also important that we capture the student voice. As part of the program, we will send student and teacher surveys towards the end of the year.



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# FAQ

## What if a Little Buddy doesn't want to write a letter?

If a Little Buddy does not want to write or writes a very short letter we understand! Just let us know and we will tell their Big Buddy so they know what to expect and be encouraging in their reply.

## Multiple students are absent and I am missing letters. Should I wait for them before sending the letters?

If you have most of the letters, please send them to us by the deadline. This means we can screen them and it won't hold up the program. If a few late ones come through, we can always send them on individually.

## I have a student leaving/a new student coming – how does this affect the program?

Let us know about any changes to your class, we're very happy for newcomers to be added in later and paired with a Big Buddy! With students exiting, let us know so we can inform their Big Buddies.

## What if can't make deadline?

We understand that sometimes things come up and that you'll require more time! Our primary goal is to support you and your students and we are very happy to reschedule when necessary. Just let us know so that we can communicate this to the Big Buddies and keep them positively engaged with the program.

## A Little Buddy got a blog from a different Buddy, why is this?

Sometimes Big Buddies are unable to write, so other Buddies or Ardoch staff will write on their behalf so no one misses out. The Little Buddy can respond to the interim Buddy, and their Big Buddy will pick it up in the next round.

## Content permission forms – what are these and why are they necessary?

These forms are specifically for how Ardoch uses content and images related to our programs which are not covered by any school forms. We take our commitment to child safety seriously, and this form allows parents to control how their child's content or image is used. We would love to have as many content permission forms as possible, as without them we are unable to use Little Buddy letters or photos from visits in any newsletters or social media posts.





# Contacts

## Ardoch Program Coordinators

Claire Lawson (they/them)

Suan Sow (she/her)

## Contact details

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