Lake Washington School District

LINKS Mentor Manual

Lunch Buddy Program

LINKS Lunch Buddy Program
A Lake Washington School District Mentoring Program

Lake Washington School District

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LINKS Mentor Manual

Contact information

Communication is important as we want you to have all the support you need to build your relationship with your Lunch Buddy. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your school Site Coordinator or the district LINKS Program Coordinator, Victoria Goetze-Nelson at (vgoetzenelson@lwsd.org or 425-936-1410) at any time.

School Name	School Phone #
Bell Elementary 11212 NE 112th St., Kirkland WA 98033	425-936-2510
Clara Barton Elementary 12101 172nd Ave NE, Redmond 98052	425-936-2480
Einstein Elementary 18025 NE 116th Street, Redmond 98052	425-936-2540
Ella Baker Elementary 9595 Eastridge Drive NE, Redmond 98053	425-936-2790
Franklin Elementary 12434 NE 60th Street, Kirkland 98033	425-936-2550
Keller Elementary 13820 - 108th Avenue NE, Kirkland 98034	425-936-2580
Lakeview Elementary 10400 – NE 68th ST, Kirkland 98033	425-936-2600
Mann Elementary 17001 NE 104th St., Redmond 98052	425-9362610
Mead Elementary 1725 - 216th Ave NE, Sammamish 98074	425-936-2630
Muir Elementary 14012 - 132nd Ave NE, Kirkland 98034	425-936-2640
Redmond Elementary 16800 NE 80th Street, Redmond 98052	425-936-2660
Rush Elementary 6101 - 152nd Ave NE, Redmond 98052	425-936-2690
Sandburg Elementary 12801 - 84th Ave NE, Kirkland 98034	425-936-2700
Smith Elementary 23305 NE 14th Street, Sammamish 98074	425-936-2710
Twain Elementary 9525 - 130th Ave NE, Kirkland 98033	425-936-2730

Where LINKS fits in the District Mission

The LINKS program fits into the larger mission of Lake Washington School District, "Each student will graduate prepared to lead a rewarding and responsible life as a contributing member of our community and greater society." The LINKS Lunch Buddy program, which matches a student one-on-one with a community member to develop a mentor/mentee relationship throughout the school year, aligns with LWSD values by focusing on students and connections.

Lake Washington School District's strategic plan, *Elevate*, highlights six strategic priorities which help guide the district to achieve its mission. One of these priorities is Well-Being. The LINKS Lunch Buddy program trains mentors to provide social-emotional support to students as they develop a relationship through their weekly one-hour meetings. At these meetings, the mentor is present solely for that one student to play games, do crafts or simply talk.

LINKS Program Goals

LINKS Lunch Buddy Mentors provide social-emotional support to students who need a little extra one-on-one attention. Studies have shown that children with mentors are more likely to succeed.

The LINKS program has developed three goals that closely align to LWSD's values:
1) Students will feel connected.
2) Students will feel valued.
3) Students will be engaged in the school community.

LINKS Funding

As of the 2019-2020 school year the LINKS program will receive most of its basic funding from Lake Washington School District. The program will continue to receive grant money from the Lake Washington Schools Foundation to support future growth in the program.

LINKS Growth

In the 2018-2019 school year, the LINKS program was in 10 elementary schools. Some schools had 3-4 students and others had over 20. In the 2019-2020 school year, the LINKS program was in 15 elementary schools. Although there is no magic number to how many students a school should have in their program, the LINKS program encourages each school to set a goal to show their own program growth.

What is a Lunch Buddy Mentor?

Mentors are approved volunteers who have gone through a two-hour orientation process. They will abide by the terms of the Lake Washington School District Volunteer Handbook as well as the guidelines stated in this Mentor Manual.

A Lunch Buddy mentor is someone who serves as a friend, coach, role model or guide. In the LINKS Lunch Buddy Program, we bring students together with caring adults who offer support, encouragement, and friendship. Mentors come during school hours once a week and spend the lunch hour in a pre-assigned area to eat, play games, make crafts, talk, and do other agreed-upon activities for the school year. Mentors provide social-emotional support to students who need a little extra one-on-one attention.

Mentor Orientation:

Role of a Mentor

Appropriate Roles and Guidelines for being a mentor - Please see chart below of roles mentors do and don't play

A Mentor is a…	A Mentor is not a…
Friend	Judge
Coach	Surrogate Parent
Good Listener	Babysitter
Confidant	Professional Counselor/Social Worker
Guide	ATM
Positive Role Model	Taxi driver
Advocate	Academic Teacher
Connector	Savior
	Disciplinarian

Building a Social-Emotional Relationship:

- Approaches to Mentoring
  - Prescriptive Approach
    - Tries to "fix" people
    - Gives advice more than listens
    - Controls choices of activities
    - Judgmental
  - Developmental Approach (this is the approach used in our program)
    - Listens and asks questions

        - Ensure your buddy has voice and choice
        - Focuses on having fun
        - Suspends judgment

- Phases of a Relationship
    - Getting to know the student
        - Fixed Mindset vs. Growth Mindset

Fixed Mindset vs. Growth Mindset Carol Dweck	
Fixed Mindset (intelligence is static)	Growth Mindset (intelligence can be developed)
Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to – • Avoid challenges • Gets defensive or give up easily • Sees effort as fruitless or worse • Ignores useful feedback • Feels threatened by the success of others. As a result, they may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential.	Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to – • Embrace challenges • Persists in the face of setbacks • Sees effort as the path to mastery • Learns from criticism • Finds lessons and inspiration in the success of others. As a result, they reach even higher levels of achievement.

Dweck, C. (2006). Mindset: The New Psychology of Success. New York, USA: Ballantine Books.

        - Praise vs. Encouragement

Praise (Focuses on a judgment or evaluation of a static moment)	Encouragement (Focuses on the process and abilities of the person)
To express favorable judgment of something	To spur on, to stimulate
An expression of approval	To inspire
Focuses on the "doer"	Focuses on the process
Recognizes complete, perfect product, "You did it right!"	Recognizes the effort and improvement, "You gave it your best!"

    - Phase 1: Initiation – Develop Rapport and Build Trust
        - Be reliable & trustworthy
        - Listen and look for clues about your mentee
        - Build common interests
        - Establish boundaries
        - Be authentic
        - Have fun
    - Phase 2: Cultivation – Consistency Creates Trust

        - Use the Developmental Approach
        - Be predictable
        - Find rhythm in your interactions together
    - Phase 3: Transformation – Opportunities for Growth
        - Mentee develops confidence
        - Mentee seeks new experiences
        - Mentee needs more than your resources
        - Find activities that teach new skills & provide new experiences
        - Celebrate **efforts** as well as **accomplishments**
    - Phase 4: Closure – Time for Reflection
        - 5-week plan for closure
        - Talk with your mentee about both of your feelings
        - Reflect & celebrate
        - Be clear about future interactions
        - Create a tangible marker
        - Say thank you
        - Say good-bye

Reflective Communication

Reflective Communication involves two key steps:

- Active Listening - Listening and understanding the speaker's idea/feelings. Three ways to show you are actively listening:
    - Make eye contact
    - Pay attention
    - Body language
- "Reflecting" or mirroring the statement back to the speaker to confirm understanding. Reflective statements consist of three parts:
    - **Prefix:** *It sounds like …; I hear what you're saying…; I'm wondering if…*
    - **Feelings:** Be precise. Do not use minimizers or maximizers and incorporate the word "feeling" before you state the feeling word. ie. "It sounds like you're feeling sad about…"
    - **Source of feelings:** Completes the empathetic response. Focus on the feelings of the mentee and not behavior of third party. Ie. "It sounds like you're feeling sad about mommy and daddy fighting."

Examples

Reflective: It seems to me you're feeling betrayed by your friend.
Not Reflective: Your friend betrayed you.

Reflective Statement: It sounds to me like you're feeling disappointed with your brother
Not Reflective: Your brother disappointed you.

Excerpts from the Volunteer Handbook

Mentor Expectations

- Be an approved volunteer
- Sign in and out at the office and always wear an ID badge while on school grounds
- Wear professional attire
- Show respect for all staff and students
- Share concerns regarding students with the school staff only
- If you cannot make your scheduled volunteer time, please call the school so the teacher and students will know you will not be there.
- Please do not bring younger children to the school during your volunteer hours.
- Please turn off your cell phone while you are volunteering in the classroom and refrain from making personal calls or texting while on the school campus.

Maintain Student Confidentiality

Volunteers are expected and required to keep all 'student information' that they obtain while working as a volunteer for the LWSD confidential. In fact, federal law strictly prohibits school districts and district volunteers from releasing any student information without parent/guardian permission. Student information includes all academic, medical and personal information. Volunteers cannot take photos of students during their volunteer activities and post them publicly without authorization from the school. Student work, like artwork or papers, is also protected by law and cannot be shared publicly without written permission.
Disclosure of student information by a volunteer is a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and may subject the volunteer and the LWSD to civil liability. It is very important that you keep information about students confidential. It is important that you do not discuss students or their progress with others –even their parents. Do not make references to student's abilities in front of other students.

General Guidelines for Safe Interaction with Students

The school board expects that all staff and volunteers will strive to set the kind of example for students that will serve them well in their own conduct and behavior and contribute toward a school atmosphere that is friendly but has a degree of formality.

All interactions with students should be professional and focused on teaching and learning. These guidelines protect both the student and the volunteer.

Do not:

- Take a student or students on private outings
- Initiate social activities with students
- Have a prolonged verbal exchange with students if you have an impromptu encounter at a public place
- Provide childcare for students

- Ask a student to baby-sit for your family
- Engage in Social Networking with students via Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter or any other social networking website to initiate or maintain relationship(s) or to communicate with any student that is not consistent with appropriate professional behavior and/or boundaries

Communication

Do not:

- Say or write things to a student that you would be uncomfortable sharing with the student's parents, district/school administrators or the teacher you are working with.
- Make any comments that are based on gender or could be construed as sexist
- Make any comments and/or innuendos that are sexual in nature or could be construed as sexual
- Make jokes that belittle or diminish another person
- Give students compliments that focus on physical attributes
- Initiate conversations or correspondence of a private and/or personal nature with students
- Email a student directly either through a student email account or a personal student account
- Initiate or accept or participate in any remote meetings (over any remote meeting software platforms like Zoom, GotoMeeting, Skype, Microsoft Teams, etc.) without a supervisor, or staff member fully aware of the meeting and included in the meeting

Maintaining Communication Boundaries in the LINKS Lunch Buddy Program

As mentors in the LINKS Lunch Buddy program, it is imperative that we strictly adhere to the Lake Washington School District's guidelines on communication boundaries. To ensure the integrity of our mentoring relationships, we must avoid sharing any personal contact information with students or their families. This encompasses all forms of communication channels, including but not limited to home addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and social media accounts.

It is essential to remember that all mentor-mentee interactions are to be conducted solely within the confines of the school setting. By doing so, we uphold a secure and respectful environment, fostering a positive mentoring experiences for all participants.

Working Alone with Students at School

- Always keep the door open and lights on
- Do not post anything on class windows that would obstruct a clear view into the room

Gifts

In general, giving gifts to students is not encouraged. If it is important to you, you should:

- Ask the school Site Coordinator
    - Some families do not wish for their children to receive gifts
    - Coordinator needs to check on any listed allergies if gift is food
- If the school Site Coordinator gives you permission, the gift needs to be of nominal value (less than $5)

Physical Contact with Students

It is LWSD's expectation that all physical contact between mentors and students must be professional and appropriate: high fives, fist bump or a hand on the shoulder are alright.

Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect

Volunteers are in a unique position to observe students. If you suspect that a student may be the victim of abuse (verbal or physical) or neglect, report it immediately to the school Site Coordinator, principal, school counselor or district LINKS Program Coordinator.

Emergency Procedures (Fire drills and lockdowns)

In any emergency situation, go to the nearest classroom and follow staff instructions.

Attendance

If you are sick or cannot make your scheduled time with your Lunch Buddy, please follow the instructions below:

- If your meeting is the same day – Please call the school office as soon as possible and let them know you are sick and cannot come in to meet your Lunch Buddy.
- If your meeting is in the future - Please email the school Site Coordinator and they will remind your Lunch Buddy.

The phone numbers for the schools are at the beginning of this manual. If you call, let the office staff know you are a Lunch Buddy. Ask them to please let the school Site Coordinator and the student know you will be absent for the day.

If the student is sick or unavailable for your scheduled time the school Site Coordinator will either call or email to let you know. Sometimes students leave school for doctor's appointments in the middle of the day and this information may not make it to the school Site Coordinator before your scheduled time. It may be a good practice to contact the school to confirm that your student is available before you head to the school.

New Mentor Welcome Process

- Email Introduction

    - District LINKS Program Coordinator will introduce the new mentor to the school Site Coordinator.
    - School Site Coordinator will set up a time for mentor to come in for a mini school orientation/tour.

- Mentor Tour
    - Introduction to the office staff
    - See where to sign in/out for the school
    - See where to sign the Mentor Hours Log Binder. It is important to log your hours every time you come in as it is necessary for funding.
    - See where the LINKS name badges are kept. Please wear your badge while on school grounds and leave in the office when done.
    - See the location of the lunchroom, library (review process of taking out a book or staying in library), adult bathrooms, recess area and LINKS designated area with all the LINKS supplies.
    - Receive handouts and review: About your School Fact Sheet, School Calendar and Discussion Topics
    - Introduction to the Lunch Buddy student at this time or wait until the next meeting.
    - Confirm where to meet the student every week

Monthly Mentor Support

- First Month Mentor Follow-up
    - After first meeting with student the school Site Coordinator will follow-up with you in person, by phone or email.
    - Two weeks later (or after 3rd meeting with student) the school Site Coordinator will follow-up with you in person, by phone or email.
- Monthly follow-up
    - Every month school Site Coordinator will check in with you in some way.
- Feel free to contact the school Site Coordinator or the district LINKS Program Coordinator at any time if you need any help.

Mentor Matching

The district LINKS Program Coordinator and the school Site Coordinator will work together to match students with mentors based on mentor and student interests, schedule and special considerations.

Some information may be shared with the mentor to make it easier for the mentor to understand what their role is in working with the student.

Students selected for the Lunch Buddy program

There is a wide range of reasons students get referred to the program. A teacher, principal or counselor can identify which students will benefit the most from the program and who face challenges to their academic success. The students might:

- Qualify for Safety Net Services
- Be English Language Learners
- Qualify as homeless under McKinney-Vento
- Be having behavioral challenges which affect their ability to focus on academics
- Be having trouble connecting and engaging with the teacher or other students.
- Be any student that would benefit from having extra adult support.

Special Circumstances

Special Circumstances

The LINKS Lunch Buddy Program is designed to provide students with consistent, one-on-one mentoring for one hour each week during the school day. While this structure works well for many students, we recognize that individual needs and circumstances may occasionally present challenges.

A common challenge in the program is students wanting to invite friends to their Lunch Buddy sessions. While we understand the desire to share the experience, the LINKS Program is designed to support one-on-one mentoring. Students are **not permitted** to invite friends unless it has been **pre-arranged and approved** by the School Coordinator.

Our goal is to ensure that each student receives meaningful support tailored to their individual needs. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to your School Coordinator or the District Program Coordinator for guidance.

Closure Process

Some students move around a lot or there is a lot of transition in their lives. They might not have experienced a healthy closure process in their relationships. The Lunch Buddy program follows a school year, so there is a natural beginning in September and an end in June. The way that a relationship ends can have a big impact on a young person. When done with care and intention, closure can be healthy and positive.

The LINKS program values the importance of helping students experience a thoughtful and healthy closure process. Your school's Site Coordinator will determine when the 3-Week Closure Process will begin and will share specific details, including the final day to meet with your Lunch Buddy.

The district LINKS Program Coordinator will email the mentors around the middle of May to provide information on the discussion topics for each of the closure weeks and the closure project.

Some schools organize an end of year event with their Lunch Buddy group, others will invite the mentors to the school Volunteer Tea.

3 Week Closure Process

Some students face frequent transitions and unexpected changes in their lives, which can impact their sense of stability and security. By ending a mentoring relationship with a planned, gradual process, whether for the summer or permanently, you can provide youth with a healthy and positive closure experience. Since your mentoring experience follows the school year, there is a natural endpoint in June. The manner in which a relationship concludes can significantly affect a young person. When approached with care and intention, closure can be both healthy and positive.

Week 1 (starting Tuesday, May 27th)

- **Reflect on the Past Year**: Discuss the changes and growth observed in your lunch buddy.
- **Share Initial Feelings:** Talk about your feelings before meeting your buddy and ask them about their initial thoughts. Share how you feel now and compliment your buddy (e.g., "I'm so happy to have met you and have really enjoyed getting to know you").
- **Highlight Favorite Activities:** Share the highlights or favorite activities of the year. Ask your buddy about their favorite memory or activity with you.
- **Closure Project:** Kits are available at your school. Assist younger buddies with parts of the project if needed. Contact your School Coordinator if you don't see the kits with other Lunch Buddy activities. Have fun!
- **Alternate Project available:** If a photo was not available for the closure project, you can use posterboard instead. Create a picture you think the other person will like, such as their favorite animal, food, sport, or something that reminds you of them. Have fun and be creative!

Week 2 (starting Monday, June 2nd)

- **Discuss Next School Year**: Ask if they are looking forward to the next grade, which friends they hope to have in their class, and if there is a specific teacher they are hoping to have.
- **Middle School Transition:** If they are transitioning to middle school, discuss their feelings about the new school, having multiple teachers, and any tours they have taken. Explore the middle school website together to alleviate anxiety and answer questions.

    - **Middle School Counselor Advice:** Use the laptop assigned to your buddy to explore the middle school website together. This activity can help them transition smoothly by familiarizing them with the new environment, daily schedules, and available student activities.
    - **Library Computer Access:** Email your School Coordinator ahead of time to arrange the use of a library computer if needed.

- **Share Your Intentions for Next Year:** Inform your buddy if you can continue mentoring next year and why you want to continue. Ask if they would like to continue with you in September. If you cannot continue, explain the reasons (e.g., job change, new responsibilities, scheduling conflict, moving).
- **Complete Closure Project:** If not already done, complete the closure project today.

Week 3 (starting Monday, June 9th)

- **Discuss Summer Break Plans:** Share your plans for the summer and ask your buddy about their plans. Be sensitive to their financial situation and discuss activities they might do at home.
- **Express Your Feelings:** Share that you will miss seeing them over the summer but look forward to catching up in September if this is your intention.
- **Special Card and Gift:** Your buddy will have a special homemade card and thank you gift for you. Check with your School Coordinator for the last day of Lunch Buddies.

By following this structured timeline, you can ensure a positive and healthy closure experience for your lunch buddy, providing them with stability and security during transitions.

What to do if you or a student need to stop meeting mid-year

Occasionally, circumstances may arise that require either a mentor or a student to discontinue participation in the LINKS Lunch Buddy Program before the end of the school year. If this situation occurs, please follow these steps to ensure a smooth and supportive transition:

- **Notify the School Site Coordinator** as soon as possible. Early communication allows staff to determine the most appropriate way to support the student and manage the change with care.
- **Provide advance notice whenever possible.** If you are aware of the need to end the mentoring relationship a few weeks in advance, please try to follow the closure process outlined in the program guidelines, even if on a shortened timeline.
- **Support the student through the transition.** If a student needs to discontinue or if a mentor must step away, please recognize that this may be an emotional or stressful time for the student. Use suggested conversation prompts and activities to help them reflect on their experience and find closure in a positive and respectful way.

If you have any questions or need guidance during this process, you are also welcome to contact the District LINKS Program Coordinator, Victoria Goetze-Nelson at vgoetzenelson@lwsd.org

Helping your Lunch Buddy with Conflict Resolution

The district uses a conflict resolution management program specifically designed for children called Kelso's Choice. The program philosophy is simple: each child is smart enough and strong enough to resolve conflict. Kelso the frog teaches students how to solve "small" problems on their own. "Small" problems include conflicts that cause "small" feelings of annoyance, embarrassment, boredom, etc. "BIG problems" always need to be taken to an adult. These are situations that are scary, dangerous, illegal, etc.

Kelso has nine choices to solve "small problems." These are illustrated in the Kelso's Choice Wheel. When your lunch buddy shares their "small problem," ask them if they tried one or two of Kelso's Choices. If that does not work, then encourage them to share with their teacher, school counselor or recess staff.

Recess Guidelines

As the Lunch Buddy program happens during lunch time and recess, some students want to eat quickly and go out to recess. We generally recommend that you try to encourage your students to stay inside with you to play games and do other activities while you build common interests and find a rhythm in your time together. Once you feel you have developed a relationship with your Lunch Buddy, you can work together to develop a recess schedule.

If your Lunch Buddy runs off at recess, have a conversation with them about some guidelines. The two of you can try to agree on a recess schedule. Maybe in nice weather you two can go outside for the last 15 minutes of your session and the student can show you his/her favorite recess activity. If activities at recess become a problem, please talk to the school Site Coordinator.

General Playground Rules

Each school has slightly different playground rules. Students should follow all directions given by playground staff and behave in a respectful manner towards playground staff and other students. Here is a list of general playground rules:

- Have fun!
- Obey directions given by all supervisors.

- Stay within the playground boundaries and away from off limit areas.
- Follow game and equipment rules.
- Use school equipment; do not bring outside toys/playground equipment (plastic bats, tennis/whiffle/baseballs/footballs) or electronic devices from home.
- Stay away from fences, trees, and other structures not intended as playground equipment.
- Speak respectfully to each other.
- Stop playing immediately when the signal is given that recess has ended.
- During inclement weather students are to avoid playing in/on wet and/or sloppy areas.
- In heavy rain, coats with hoods are required if students are playing in open areas.
- Umbrellas with safety tips only will be allowed on the playground.
- Once a game has been established students should allow others to play.
- No trading cards at school.

Mentor Resources

The school Site Coordinator and the district LINKS Program Coordinator are always available to help. Their contact information is at the beginning of this manual.

Every school has many activities available to use during your meeting such as games, arts and crafts, puzzles, Legos, and cards. Your school coordinator will point out the location of these items on your tour. You are welcome to bring in a game or activity for you and your Lunch Buddy, but please let your school Site Coordinator know before you do so.

You have access to the school library, please ask your school Site Coordinator for the procedure of going in to look at or to check out a book.

The LINKS webpage has a list of activities you and your Lunch Buddy can do together:

- Get to Know you Questions K-1
- Get to Know you Questions 2-5
- Mazes
- Word Search
- Dot to Dot
- Coloring Pages
- I Spy Pages
- Craft Ideas
- Crossword Puzzles
- 3-2-1 Game

Frequently asked questions

What should I do if I can't come to my regularly scheduled Lunch Buddy meeting?

- *If your meeting is the same day – Please call the school office as soon as possible and let them know you are sick and cannot come in to meet your lunch buddy.*
- *If your meeting is in the future - Please email the school Site Coordinator and they will remind your lunch buddy.*

Will someone tell me if my Lunch Buddy is absent on the day of our meeting? *Yes, the school Site Coordinator should contact you by phone or email if your Lunch Buddy is absent or can't meet for any reason.*

Is there any flexibility in the day of the week I can come? *We do try to keep a regular schedule for the students. If you do need more flexibility, please work with the school Site Coordinator.*

Can I bring any games or activities from home? *We do provide some games and activities. If there is a particular game or activity you and your student are interested in, please check with the school Site Coordinator before bringing it in.*

What should I do if my Lunch Buddy doesn't show up for our meeting? *Please talk to the office staff and let them know who you're waiting for. If this happens on a regular basis, please talk with your school Site Coordinator so they can figure out the problem.*

What should I do if my Lunch Buddy runs off at recess? *You may want to have a conversation with your Lunch Buddy about recess. The two of you can try to agree on a recess schedule. Maybe in nice weather you two can go outside for the last 15 minutes of your session and the student can show you his/her favorite recess activity. If activities at recess become a problem, please talk to the school Site Coordinator.*

Can I share contact information with my Lunch Buddy? *No, contact information cannot be exchanged as this is a school district program and it is district policy not to share information.*

Can I take a picture of my Lunch Buddy? *No, the district needs to have a signed permission form from parents to allow any pictures.*

Who do I talk to if I have any questions, concerns or comments? *We would love to talk with you anytime about anything! Please email or call (and leave a message with the office) your school Site Coordinator and/or the district LINKS Program Coordinator. Contact information is on page 4 of this manual.*