

LUNCH BUDDY NEWSLETTER

August 2026

Welcome back to the 2026-27 School Year!! We hope you had a relaxing summer, and we are so grateful to have you back as a Lunch Buddy Mentor. As you can imagine, returning to school is a big transition for many of our students. To help with this process, this newsletter includes tips for reconnecting with your mentee.



We will also be discussing how to best reconnect with your mentee at our upcoming coffee hour. Please join us for our **September Mentor Hour, Thursday, September 17th from 12 PM to 1 PM**. You can [RSVP now](#). More information about the event is contained in this newsletter, along with many activity ideas and some good reference information.

If you have any questions/concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Victoria. She's here to help support you in any way you need. Again, we appreciate all of you and the time you share to help your Lunch Buddy feel supported and special!

Warm Regards,
Victoria, Tarikah, and Julie

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September Mentor Hour – Reconnecting with Your Student



As the school year begins, returning to your role as a Lunch Buddy Mentor is a wonderful opportunity to reestablish your connection with your mentee, provide consistency, and help your student feel supported. After a summer apart, even strong relationships may need a gentle reset. How did you first establish your mentoring relationship? Are there any areas you need to revisit? We will discuss these topics and more during our **September Mentor Hour**.

[Sign up now!](#)

Date: Thursday, September 17th, 2026

Time: 12 PM to 1 PM

Location: Lake Washington School District Resource Center
16250 NE 74th St, Redmond, WA 98052
(425) 936-1200

Parking Options:

- **Small lot** next to our building on 163rd Street (behind the Marriott Hotel)
- **Garage** at NE 74th St & 163rd PI NE (entrance on 163rd, Evergreen Medical Clinic on the first floor)
- **Garage** on 164th Ave NE (across from the Marriott Hotel entrance)
- Feel free to park wherever you find a spot, but please allow an extra 10 minutes to walk to the building.

New Activity Ideas

Below are links to some fun activities you can print (or ask your School Coordinator to print for you ahead of time) and share with your lunch buddy.

Puzzles

- [Bicycle Safety Word Search](#)
- [Apple Crossword](#)
- [Pokemon Meowith Maze](#)

Coloring Pages

- [Pug with Tilted Head](#)
- [Lego Doctor Strange](#)
- [Unicorn in Field of Flowers](#)

How to Draw

- [Lego Self Portrait](#)
- [Fall Trees](#)

I Spy

- [Back to School Color by Number](#)
- [Birthday](#)

Jokes & Riddles

Q: What do you call a fake noodle?

A: An impasta.

Q: Why did the banana go to the doctor?

A: It wasn't peeling well.

Q: What game do tornadoes like to play at recess?

A: Twister.



Q: What's a cat's favorite magazine?

A: A catalog.

Q: Why did the teacher wear sunglasses to school?

A: Because her students were so bright.

Q: What's the smartest insect?

A: A spelling bee.

Skill Builder

Reconnecting With Your Mentee After Summer



As the school year begins, it's a wonderful time to reconnect with your student. The following information is intended to give age-appropriate ideas to jump start your reconnection.

Quick Tips Box

- Keep it simple and positive
- Follow the student's lead
- Use games to ease conversation
- Be patient—connection takes time
- Show up consistently

Simple First Month Plan

Week 1–2: Reconnect, play simple games, share recent stories

Week 3–4: Introduce light routines (check-in questions, favorite topics)

Ongoing: Build consistency and gradually deepen conversations

Start with Warm, Low-Pressure Connection

- **Reintroduce Yourself Casually:** Even if the student remembers you, a friendly reintroduction after a break builds comfort.
Example: *"I'm so happy to see you again—I've been looking forward to our lunches!"*
- **Acknowledge the Gap:** Normalize that it's been a while. Keep it light and positive.
- **Use Their Name Often:** This reinforces familiarity and belonging.

Conversation Starters That Work

Try open-ended, easy-entry questions:

- "What was something fun you did recently?"
- "What are you excited about for this school year?"
- "What's your favorite thing to do at recess now?"
- "Have you learned anything new or interesting lately?"

✅ Tip: Let the student lead the conversation when possible—follow their interests and energy level.

Incorporate Light Activities

Some students engage more easily through doing rather than talking:

- Simple games (Rock-Paper-Scissors tournaments, "Would You Rather," drawing together)
- Bring a conversation deck or prompt cards
- Create a mini "highlight" drawing or list together

Rebuild Trust and Predictability

- **Be Consistent:** Show up on time and follow through—routine builds security.
- **Review Expectations Gently:** Remind them what Lunch Buddy time is about (safe, fun, one-on-one, respectful space).
- **Respect Their Pace:** Some students may seem quieter after a break—this is normal.

Focus on Relationship First

Avoid jumping straight into goals or challenges:

- Prioritize connection before problem-solving
- Celebrate small interactions and positive moments
- Offer genuine encouragement
- "I noticed how friendly you were to your classmate!"

- “You worked really hard on that project.”

Genuine encouragement helps students feel valued and recognized.

Be Mindful of Transitions

Back-to-school can feel overwhelming. Your presence matters:

- Validate feelings: "It can feel weird coming back after a break—you're not alone."
- Keep your tone calm and reassuring
- Watch for signs the student might need extra support and share with program staff if needed

Final Reminder

Your consistency, kindness, and attention can make a lasting difference. Even small moments of connection help students feel seen, valued, and ready for school or other life challenges. Small moments of connection help students feel seen, valued, and supported.

Thank you for being a positive, dependable presence in a student's life. Your time and commitment make a difference.

Reminders

Maintaining Communication Boundaries in the LINKS Lunch Buddies Program

As mentors in the LINKS Lunch Buddy program, it is imperative that you 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.

Missing a Visit?

Staying connected with your buddy—even when you can't meet in person—is incredibly important. It reminds them that they are cared for and not forgotten. Many of our students struggle with low self-esteem, and simply knowing they are in your thoughts can make a meaningful difference.

Your message can be short and simple or a bit more detailed—whatever feels natural to you. For example:

“Hi buddy! I’m in Chicago this week for work. Good luck on your math test—I hope it goes well. I’ll see you next week! Miss Victoria.”

Ways to Stay Connected

To help maintain your bond, consider sending one of the following (please submit it to your coordinator in advance so it can be delivered on your usual meeting day):

- A short email or handwritten letter
- A postcard (kids love pictures)
- A greeting card

Thank you for your thoughtfulness and for helping your Lunch Buddy feel seen, valued, and supported.

Dates to Remember

Aug 31	First Day of School
Aug 31 – Sept 2	Half-Day Elementary Conferences
Sept 7	No School – Labor Day
Sept 9	First Day of 1.5 hrs. Early Release
Sept 17	Mentor Hour: Reconnecting With Your Student
Sept 21	Welcome Back! Returning Lunch Buddies begin visits this week



NOTE: If you have not yet contacted your School Coordinator about scheduling your Lunch Buddy meetings, please take a moment to reach out and find a day that fits your schedule. School Coordinator contact information can be found in the list below.

School Contact Information

School Name	School Phone #	School Site Coordinator	Email Address
Baker Elementary 9595 Eastridge Drive NE, Redmond 98053	425-936-2790	Moriah Oster	moster@lwsd.org
Barton Elementary 12101 172nd Ave NE, Redmond 98052	425-936-2480	Jody Hagler	jhagler@lwsd.org
Bell Elementary 11212 NE 112th St., Kirkland 98033	425-936-2510	Brenda Yin Erika Langley	byin@lwsd.org elangley@lwsd.org
Einstein Elementary 18025 NE 116th Street, Redmond 98052	425-936-2540	Renee Cunningham	rcunningham@lwsd.org
Franklin Elementary 12434 NE 60th Street, Kirkland 98033	425-936-2550	Stacey O'Brien	staobrien@lwsd.org
Keller Elementary 13820 - 108th Avenue NE, Kirkland 98034	425-936-2580	Ashleigh Stuckey	astuckey@lwsd.org
Lakeview Elementary 10400 – NE 68 th ST, Kirkland 98033	425-936-2600	Debus Frey Hayley Peters	dfrey@lwsd.org hpeters@lwsd.org
Mann Elementary 17001 NE 104th St., Redmond, 98052	425-936-2610	Susan Conwell	sconwell@lwsd.org
Mead Elementary 1725 - 216th Ave NE, Sammamish 98074	425-936-2630	Melissa Heye	mheye@lwsd.org
Muir Elementary 14012 - 132nd Ave NE, Kirkland 98034	425-936-2640	Gail Anderson	ganderson@lwsd.org

Redmond Elementary 16800 NE 80th Street, Redmond 98052	425-936- 2660	Sarah Gray	sgray@lwsd.org
Rush Elementary 6101 - 152nd Ave NE, Redmond 98052	425-936- 2690	Lloyd Byram	lbyram@lwsd.org
Sandburg Elementary 12801 - 84th Ave NE, Kirkland 98034	425-936- 2700	Tracy Measham	tmeasham@lwsd.org
Smith Elementary 23305 NE 14th Street, Sammamish 98074	425-936- 2710	Kellie Eaton	keaton@lwsd.org
Twain Elementary 9525 - 130th Ave NE, Kirkland 98033	425-936- 2730	Kirsten Montgomery	kmontgomery@lwsd.o rg