



Child Safety Guidelines for Virtual Matches

Volunteer Big Brothers and Big Sisters will be expected to follow these guidelines while matched with a Little Brother or Little Sister. Please contact your case manager with any questions or concerns.

- Expectations and safety guidelines for e-mentoring will be emailed ahead of time and discussed, at interviews. All enrollment materials are also linked on our website (www.bbbs-fc.org).

Use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco:

- Use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products by you or anyone associated with you when you are virtually engaging with your Little is strictly prohibited.

Abuse, neglect, mal-treatment, safety issues:

- All BBBS staff members and Bigs are mandated reporters.
- Bigs are required to report all concerns to their Case Manager.
- If there is a child safety concern outside of our office hours, please call the supervisor on duty at 413.834.1968.
- If you cannot reach a supervisor on duty nor your Case Manager and you suspect there is an immediate safety risk, you should telephone your local police department or call the Child-At-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200.

Personal stressors / life changes:

- Inform Case Manager of changes that occur in life related to jobs, relationships, pregnancy, marriage, physical/mental health, finances, DUI, driving privileges suspended, auto insurance cancellation, etc.
- Update Case Manager with changes in address, phone, e-mail, work schedule and availability, etc.
- Update Case Manager with changes in Little's family, living situation, health issues, safety issues, availability, inappropriate requests, etc.

Social Media and Safety expectations:

- For your privacy and safety, ensure that your online profile pages have security settings that do not allow the general public to view your information.
- Inform your Case Manager if you choose to become online friends with your Little and/or your Little's parent/guardian.
- All new virtual matches are required to connect through electronic means **once per week at minimum**. This may include phone calls, online cooperative gaming, texting, secure personal messaging, video chatting, hand written letters or other gaming apps.
- This does NOT include interacting on social media public pages, (i.e.: liking or commenting on a social media post) which is still strongly discouraged in general by BBBSFC.
- Parent/ guardian and volunteer will have agreed upon rules and boundaries for times of day and days of the week around communication between volunteer and mentee.
- Privacy restrictions and confidentiality are ultimately up to the guardian's level of comfort. BBBSFC staff can help navigate these boundaries and offer suggestions as needed.

On – going E mentoring:

- Virtual contact will be the only type of contact matches are allowed to have (see above listed methods for specifics)
- Existing matches made prior to March 1, 2020, may resume face to face interactions as soon as the agency states this is safe.
- New matches made after 4/15/2020 may choose to remain "e-matches", or request to begin physically meeting in person and await approval, once social distancing requirements have been lifted.
- For new matches made after 4/15/2020 to begin face to face interactions, a physical, in-person match meeting will be set by the BBBSFC case manager for all parties. At this meeting, existing in-person community-based mentoring guidelines will be reviewed and match agreements will be signed. After that, matches may begin to meet in person as traditional community matches at the frequency of twice a month.
- Matches may NOT visit a mentor's home until a case manager has completed a home inspection and approved this type of interaction.
- All mentors moving into traditional community-based mentoring matches must have a home inspection completed within 3 months of beginning in-person match interactions regardless of their desire to go to the mentor's home with their mentee or not. This is in line with our current child safety policies.
- BBBS asks parents/guardians to agree not to take away all options for matches to meet virtually because of other punishments that involved electronic restrictions.

Communication with BBBS case managers:

- Volunteers, parents/guardians and littles will be required to check in with their case manager on a monthly basis to provide a match update.
- Case managers are available and provide ongoing match support as needed.