



# Best Buddies Constitution

## **Article I: Name**

Best Buddies at:

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(School Name)

## **Article II: Mission**

The mission of Best Buddies is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). We do this by matching student volunteers in mutually enriching friendships with persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## **Article III: Membership**

Membership in any Best Buddies chapter is open to all students in good standing with their school administration without regard to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or politics. Middle and high school chapter members generally include students in both general education and special education, while college chapter members are college students and individuals involved with an agency supporting people with IDD (group homes, transition programs, community organizations, etc.). Below are the membership opportunities available through Best Buddies for interested volunteers:

- Peer buddy: A student without an IDD committed to a one-to-one friendship for one academic year with a person with an IDD
- Buddy: An individual with a mild to moderate IDD who commits to a one-to-one friendship with a student without IDD for one academic year. Buddies participating in a college chapter must be 18 years old or older.
- Associate member/associate buddy: Associate members and associate buddies are members of the chapter who are not matched in a one-to-one friendship. These individuals may not be able to commit to a one-to-one friendship or there may not be enough members with IDD to match with all membership without IDD.

Students wishing to join Best Buddies must attend the mandatory organizational meeting, held at the beginning of the academic year. Members must then complete an online application, attend an interview with a representative of the chapter, participate in the Best Buddies Global Volunteer Training, and be selected to be matched.

*\*\* Best Buddies International reserves the right to revoke membership and/or leadership roles from our programs for any reason, at any time. All approved Best Buddies chapter members and leaders are expected to adhere to the Member Code of Conduct. \*\**

## **Article IV: Officers/Advisors**

### Section One

Officer positions include the following:

- Chapter President: A student who organizes, leads, and maintains a chartered chapter of Best Buddies for the duration of one academic year



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- **Buddy Director:** A person with an intellectual or developmental disability who ensures the full participation of buddies in one-to-one matches and group outings. This person represents the buddies of the chapter
- **Vice President:** For one full academic year, the vice president works with the chapter president to plan, direct, and supervise all chapter activities (group outings, fundraisers, etc.)
- **Secretary:** For one full academic year, the secretary oversees the individual matches by providing support, conducting friendship updates, and reporting to the chapter president as needed
- **Treasurer:** For one full academic year, the treasurer acts as the chief financial officer for the chapter

## Section Two

Applications for chapter president must be completed and submitted to Best Buddies International by completing the Best Buddies Online Chapter President Application on or before April 1 (applicable to high school and college chapters). Best Buddies staff select the chapter president through an application and interview process. Chapter president applications are available to any full-time student who has completed at least one academic year as a participant of the Best Buddies chapter. The chapter president must attend the annual Best Buddies International Leadership Conference, held in July, and the state's leadership training day held during the late summer/early fall. The chapter president interviews and selects all other officer positions.

## Section Three

A member of the faculty and a staff member of either the special education department and/or the host site will serve as advisors for the chapter:

- **Special Education Advisor (SEA)/Host Site Coordinator (HSC):** The SEA/HSC works as a liaison between the matched buddies and peer buddies to provide ongoing information, education, and training for at least one full academic year. The SEA/HSC must be a staff member of the special education faculty or the chapter's host site and must be a trained professional in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **Faculty Advisor (FA):** The FA works as a liaison between the school administration and the chapter, providing ongoing leadership and guidance for at least one full academic year. The FA must be a member of the school faculty and/or full-time staff member of the school.

## **Article V: Meetings/Activities**

There are five mandatory meetings that a chapter holds during the academic year: the organizational meeting and four chapter meetings. A chapter will also hold a minimum of four group outings during the academic year.

1. **Organizational meeting:** This is a recruitment meeting, mandatory for all students who wish to join Best Buddies, held at the beginning of the academic year.
2. **Chapter meetings:** There are a minimum of four chapter meetings during the year for all peer buddies, buddies, associate members and associate buddies must attend all chapter meetings. Advisors are encouraged to attend all chapter meetings, and the program manager is invited to attend when they are available. These meetings are scheduled throughout the academic year and include, but are not limited to:
  - a. First chapter meeting
  - b. Pre-winter break meeting
  - c. Back to Best Buddies (post-winter break) meeting
  - d. End of the year meeting



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Chapter meetings are a valuable forum for exchanging ideas, expressing concerns, providing training, and motivation and solving problems.

3. One-to-one outings: Peer buddies and buddies are required to contact each other weekly and participate in two one-to-one activities per month for a full academic year.
4. Group outings: Group outings are a time for peer buddies and buddies to get together as a group for a social activity. Four group outings are required per academic year.

## **Article VI: Finances**

Money may be needed to operate the chapter. Therefore, chapters are encouraged to hold fundraisers, or seek available school funding. Chapters are required to set up a bank account either through their school or at a local financial institution. The FA for the chapter should be the signatory on the account, and all records should be kept by the treasurer. Periodic reports on the status of these accounts are required by Best Buddies International, Inc.

Best Buddies requires \$350 chapter dues from each chartered Best Buddies International college and high school chapter for the academic year. These chapter dues are to be submitted annually on June 1 and will cover the following:

1. Use of the Best Buddies name and logo
2. Use of Best Buddies resources and training materials, including the [Best Buddies Library](#) resource website
3. Leadership conference registration fee for chapter president (travel costs are not included)
4. Use of the online paperwork and chapter communication system at [www.bestbuddiesonline.org](http://www.bestbuddiesonline.org)
5. Attendance for all officers at the state leadership training day
6. Coverage under Best Buddies International's general liability

## **Article VII: Dismissal of Members**

If a peer buddy or buddy does not fulfill the requirements of his/her commitment, the chapter president will do the following:

1. Investigate the situation before taking any action
2. After gathering all necessary information, the chapter president will approach the individual in question to address the situation

After this point, should the individual in question fail to meet the requirements of his/her commitment as a peer buddy or buddy, the member may be dismissed from the chapter. Chapter presidents are encouraged to include their advisor and Best Buddies staff contact in this decision.

A chapter is not required to rematch a peer buddy or buddy if the match has been dissolved. However, if a friendship is dissolved and the remaining individual would like to be matched again, every effort will be made to rematch this individual in a second Best Buddies friendship. The process of re-matching is generally not done during the spring semester.