

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Atlantic & Cape May Counties

Safe In-Person Match Contact Policy



Safety Comes First

As always, the safety of our Littles and their families and the safety of our mentors is our top priority. Given the serious realities associated with infectious disease transmission, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Atlantic & Cape May Counties (BBBS) has set forth the following policy as a requirement for all volunteer mentors, children and families enrolled in this program.

Adherence to the following policy is a requirement for all program participants and is not optional. Should BBBS learn that any member of the match team (mentor, child, parent) is violating this policy, BBBS reserves the right to take action to ensure the continued safety of the match including possible termination of the match relationship.

BBBS has developed these guidelines in consultation with other BBBS agencies, nonprofits, businesses, etc. and has designed it to comply with state and national recommendations. Even when the state or national recommendations relax fully, this policy will remain in force until BBBS issues an alternate policy. **As such, all program participants MUST continue to follow this policy until they have received explicit written notice from a BBBS representative that this policy has been modified.**

Infected/Sick Individuals or Those with Known Exposure

We require ALL sick individuals or individuals with known exposure to infections (included, but not limited to COVID-19, influenza, etc.) to do the following:

- 1) REFRAIN from in-person contact with their Big, Little, or Little's family until no longer contagious and adhere to CDC guidelines regarding contagion periods/windows.
- 2) Before any outing, Big and parent/guardian should assess their/their child's health and exposures:
 - a. Have I been around anyone who has been sick?
 - b. Do I feel achy?
 - c. Am I experiencing a fever or chills?
 - d. Am I unusually fatigued?
 - e. Do I have a cough (not allergy related) or tightness in my chest?
 - f. Am I experiencing digestive issues?
 - g. Do I have an unexplained rash?
 - h. Am I experiencing any other symptoms that are out of the ordinary?
- 3) When one is unable to meet with their Little/Big in-person due to infection or exposure to infection, AND one is also well enough to engage in virtual contact, we strongly encourage you to initiate meaningful virtual contact to keep the relationship strong and engaged until you can meet in person again. Consistency is one of the top qualities among great mentoring relationships!

Masks and Immunizations:

- 1) While wearing masks when sharing time together in-person is no longer required by BBBS, we STRONGLY ENCOURAGE all those who have not received immunizations to continue to always wear masks. Further, we STRONGLY encourage those who have received recent vaccinations to follow CDC guidance that advises wearing masks until maximum inoculation is achieved.
- 2) HOWEVER, please note that should ANY member of the mentoring relationship request continued mask-wearing, the other party MUST honor the request.
- 3) Further, a parent may require their child to wear a mask even if not requiring the Big to do so. Bigs may also decide to wear a mask even if their Little does not. Honoring your relationship by fulfilling each other's requests is both a requirement and demonstration of respect.
- 4) Should Bigs and Littles visit venues/locations together that require masks, they must comply regardless of immunization status.
- 5) Providing personal information regarding immunization is not a requirement of our program and no BBBS program participant should feel pressure to share this information or request this information of another party.
- 6) Sharing one's immunization status is purely voluntary and permitted.
- 7) PLEASE NOTE, however, that sharing your immunization status DOES NOT mean the other party should/must share their status. Should members of the match disclose their immunization status to BBBS, staff will keep this information confidential.
- 8) Ultimately, mentors and parents/guardians should continue to make thoughtful choices about what is the best for themselves/their child.
- 9) Mentors and parents/guardians should always consider ripple effects and their recent exposures. They should also consider members of their family and whether in-person meetings will place immunocompromised individuals or individuals with other health concerns at a heightened risk. Mentors and parents/guardians should be careful and sensitive in assessing if anyone feels anxious or concerned about safety and wellness. Should any party need support around how to have such conversations, they should contact BBBS for guidance.
- 10) Ultimately, being a Big is to be a role model. A mentor's responsibility is to model healthy behavior, responsible decision making, self-care, and being a rule-abiding and conscientious community member. Mentors also model ways to cope with frustrating and stressful situations by talking about feelings, suggesting healthy self-care activities, and being open about good days as well as bad days.