

Our Lady of the Wayside NS Kiltiernan



School Buddy Policy

Overview:

All classes in the school from Junior Infants to Sixth class are involved in the Big Buddy Scheme. Each junior class from Junior Infants to Second class are paired with a senior class from Third class to Sixth Class. Each child in the junior class has a Big Buddy that they are paired with from their partner class. This scheme will provide children with stimulating opportunities for learning and skill development. Buddy classes should meet regularly.

Introductory Activities:

- Big Buddies are spoken to about their role and how they are role models for positive behaviour for their little buddy at a whole school assembly.
- Discuss good procedures for working with their buddy such as reading a book aloud to them.
- Discuss good techniques for making their little buddy feel comfortable such as bending down to their level, using eye contact, praising their buddy.
- **Getting to know your buddy:** Children could do simple activities to get to know their buddy such as creating PowerPoint slide about their buddy collaboratively.

Rationale:

- Through whole school self evaluation, the need for more whole school activities was expressed.
- Through whole school self evaluation, the need for more collaborative work in the school was expressed.
- Whole school activities and collaborative work were set as priorities.

Aims:

- To increase collaborative work among teachers and children.
- To increase self-esteem.
- To promote a positive school environment.
- To focus on literacy and numeracy through the programme.

Possible Activities:

The paired classes can engage in a wide variety of activities over the year. Possible activities will include:

- **Literacy, Oral Language and Reading:**
 - **Paired Reading:** The Big Buddy reads a book aloud to their buddy. They select a book to read to their buddy. Big Buddies are talked to about the importance of their role and possible guidelines for them. Possible approach to reading:
 - The Big buddy could read the title of the book, asking their buddy to predict what they think the story will be about.
 - Big Buddy read slowly and clearly.
 - Children could point out the words as they read, helping their buddy follow the story.
 - Every few pages talk about the story ensuring the buddy understands the story.
 - Ask questions such as ‘What, do you think, will happen next?’
 - Encourage your buddy to talk about the pictures and what is happening in the story.
 - Keep praising your little buddy.
- **Digital Literacy, Oral Language and Reading.**
 - **ICT Skills:** Children could work together on the computer producing PowerPoint slide about themselves or presenting other work they’ve written.
- **Art Activities:** Children could together on an art project such as clay, print or collage.
- **Science Activities:** Simple experiments could be carried out with their buddy.
- **Literacy and Oral Language.**
 - **History:** Children explore simple primary evidence such as artefacts or pictorial evidence with their buddy.
- **Numeracy:**
 - **Maths Trail:** Children could explore a maths trail with their buddy.
- **Storytelling** – The two classes listen to storytelling of a story such as ‘The Happy Prince’ or ‘The Enormous Crocodile’. They then retell the story. Children create a Big Book. Each pair writes and illustrates a page of the story creating a Big Book.
- **Writing Genres:**
 - **Biography** – Each pair could write a short biography on themselves to share with their buddy. They could present the information in a powerpoint slide. The Big Buddy could do their slide first, then help their younger buddy with theirs. Two children could work on this in their partner’s classroom with their buddy.
 - **Creative writing** activity – Working as a pair, they could write a short story based on stimulus.
- **Sound Poetry** – Children could work in small groups using fun poems and recreating sounds in the poem.

School Buddy Policy – September 2023

- **Themed books** – Halloween/Christmas/Animals. Children select books from the library to tie in with a theme and read them to their buddy.
- **SPHE** lesson – could tie in with strand unit each class is studying for example creating identity shield, buddy crest.
- **Music** lesson – Children could compose music using musical instruments.
- **Geography** – simple trails, map skills.

Benefits:

- Increase **self-esteem** for both Big Buddy and Little Buddy.
- Providing **positive role models** for the younger children.
- Instilling **responsibility** in the Big Buddy.
- Children **enjoy reading** with their buddy.
- Enhances children's **cooperative learning** processes such as taking turns, listening, sharing knowledge and helping one another.
- Promotes **positive school environment**. Children can look out for their buddy in the yard and around the school.
- **Positive** influence on children involved in the scheme.

Ratification

	This policy was in operation for a number of years.
Sep 2023	Updated and ratified by the BOM

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: 20/9/2023

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: 20/9/23

