

Chapter Constitution

Best Buddies International



Article I: Name

Best Buddies at: _____
(School Name)

Article II: Mission

Best Buddies is dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Any school approved by both their school administration and Best Buddies International are provided the following benefits of membership with the organization:

- Exclusive use of the Best Buddies brand, including name and logo
- Administrative access for chapter leadership team and advisors to [BB360](#), the online chapter management system for Best Buddies programs
- Access to the [Best Buddies University](#) volunteer resource website for chapter leadership tools and management resources and trainings
- Coverage under Best Buddies International's general liability
- Volunteer and leadership development trainings, including the annual Best Buddies Leadership Conference and state/local Leadership Training Day

Article III: Membership

Membership in a 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. Membership in the affiliated chapter includes college-aged students at the affiliated college/university, and individuals involved with an agency supporting people with IDD known as a Host Site (group homes, transition programs, community organizations, etc.). Middle and high school members commonly include students in both general education and special education. Below are the membership opportunities available through Best Buddies for prospective volunteers:

- Members:
 - A student at the affiliated school who agrees to participate for one academic year
 - An individual, 18 years or older, involved with a Host Site who agrees to participate for one academic year

Students wishing to join Best Buddies must attend the organizational recruitment meeting, held at the beginning of the academic year, and complete the membership application form at [bestbuddies.org/join](#). Individuals interested in being matched in a one-to-one friendship will participate in an interview with the chapter leadership team of officers and/or advisors. All members of the chapter will be responsible for completing the Best Buddies Member Training annually at the start of the academic year.

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, officers, and advisors are expected to adhere to the [Member Agreement](#).

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Article IV: Chapter Leadership Team

Section One: Officers

Officer positions in the chapter 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
- Buddy Director: a person with an intellectual and/or developmental disability who provides support and ensures the full participation of members with IDD in one-to-one matches and group outings
- Vice President: the vice president works with the chapter president to plan, direct, and supervise all chapter activities (group outings, fundraisers, etc.)
- Secretary: the secretary oversees the friendship matches by providing support, conducting member check-ins, and reporting to the chapter president as needed
- Treasurer: the treasurer acts as the chief financial officer for the chapter and manages all fundraising efforts and the chapter bank account

Section Two: Chapter President

Individuals interested in applying to serve as the chapter president will complete the application process as defined by the local Best Buddies office and chapter. Chapter president applications are available to any full-time student. Applications will be submitted to the chapter leadership team and all prospective candidates will be interviewed by the current officer team or Best Buddies staff. Selection of the chapter president will take place on or before July 1. The chapter president is required to participate in the annual Best Buddies Leadership Conference, held in July, and the leadership training day hosted by Best Buddies staff in late summer/early fall. Once appointed, the incoming chapter president will conduct interviews and select the officer positions for the incoming school year.

Section Three: Chapter Advisors

The chapter will be supported by two advisors including, but not limited to, a member of the school faculty and a staff member and/or faculty of either the special education department or the host site. These positions include:

- 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
- Special Education Advisor (SEA) or Host Site Coordinator (HSC): the SEA/HSC works as a liaison between the matched chapter members to provide ongoing support, education, and training for at least one full academic year. The SEA/HSC must be a staff member of the special education department or the chapter's host site and be a trained professional in the field of disabilities

Article V: Meetings and Activities

Best Buddies chapters plan activities and events for the chapter and buddy pairs to connect throughout the year, in addition to hosting regular meetings with members. General guidelines for chapter meeting and activities include:

- Organizational recruitment meeting: this is a recruitment meeting for all prospective individuals who wish to join Best Buddies, held at the beginning of the academic year
- Chapter meetings: Best Buddies recommends that every chapter host a minimum of four chapter meetings during the year for members. Chapter meetings are a valuable forum for exchanging ideas, expressing

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concerns, providing training, and solving problems. Advisors are encouraged to attend all chapter meetings, and Best Buddies staff is invited to attend when they are available. These meetings are scheduled throughout the academic year and include, but are not limited to:

- First chapter meeting
- Pre-winter break meeting
- Back to Best Buddies (post-winter break) meeting
- End of the year meeting
- One-to-one outings: matched members, known as a buddy pair or match, are required to contact each other weekly and participate in two one-to-one activities per month for the full academic year
- Group Activities/Events: these outings are a time for members to get together as a group for a social event or community-based outing. Chapters are encouraged to have one activity per month during the academic year

Article VI: Finances

The chapter will need a bank account to use throughout the year for managing any school funding received or raised through fundraising efforts that will support chapter meetings and activities, community events, or to cover the cost of the Best Buddies Leadership Conference registration fee and travel for the incoming chapter president. Best Buddies recommends the chapter utilize financial management through the school clubs and organizations office, which will allow the faculty advisor and treasurer to serve as signatories on the account.

If bank accounts are not available through the student services office on campus, chapters are encouraged to obtain an account at an off-campus bank. This account will not be held to the policies of the school, and it will be the responsibility of the chapter to track expenses and keep records of the account number, balance, and the approved signatories. Information on obtaining off-campus bank accounts is available on the [Best Buddies University website](https://www.bestbuddies.org/).

The Chapter President (or another selected officer) is required to represent and attend the annual Best Buddies Leadership Conference annually every July. The cost of the registration fee (\$350) and travel to the conference should be budgeted for by the chapter every academic year.

Article VII: Dismissal of Members

If a member does not fulfill the requirements of membership and commitment to the chapter, the Chapter President will do the following:

1. The chapter leadership team will investigate the situation and the review membership record(s) in BB360
2. After gathering all necessary information, the Chapter President, Secretary and/or chapter advisor(s) will approach the individual in question to address the situation
3. Based on the outcome of the conversation, the chapter leadership team will develop an action plan to support the member

In the event the member in question fails to meet the requirements of the chapter, the member may be dismissed from the chapter. Notification of this decision should be communicated directly with the member and tracked in the membership record on BB360.

The chapter is not required to rematch a member if the match has been dissolved; however, if a friendship is dissolved and the remaining member would like to be matched again, every effort will be made to rematch this individual in another friendship match during the academic year.