

Information Sheet for Parents or Guardians

Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BBBS) Geelong provides friendship and support to young people who may benefit from having an additional adult role model in their lives. A Big Brother /Big Sister is someone a young person can trust, talk to learn from and spend time with.

Eligibility

To become part of the program a young person needs to be 12-18 years of age, live in the Northern or Eastern suburbs of Geelong. Big Brothers Big Sisters Geelong is designed to be of greatest assistance to young people who are in need of additional adult support and may be disengaged from education and training. Following the completion of an Application Form, the BBBS program worker will discuss your application and the program requirements with you. Additional information from any other agency providing a service to your family could also be useful in support of your application.

Volunteers

To become a Big Brother or Big Sister, a volunteer is required to undergo a lengthy screening process. This involves a number of interviews, a Working With Children's Check, National Criminal Records Check, reference checks, psychological profile and a training and orientation program.

Volunteers are members from the community who demonstrate an understanding and interest in young people by doing fun activities such as playing basketball, going to the beach, watching movies, cooking, walking the dog or bike riding.

Matching Process

When a volunteer is matched with a young person, an introduction meeting is organised with the parent, to introduce the volunteer to the young person. To put the young person at ease, the meeting takes place in the family home. Following the meeting, there is a 24-hour 'cooling off' period to ensure that everyone is happy with the decision. If all agree, the match can then proceed. The match is formally reviewed at 3 months and then again at the end of one year.

Waiting List

If the BBBS program worker is unable to initially match a volunteer and a young person, the young person may be placed on a waiting list until a match with a suitable volunteer can be found. The length of time a young person is on the waiting list may vary depending upon the availability of volunteers, the area in which the family lives and the needs of the young person being referred. It is important to advise us of any changes of personal details ie: address/phone number or other circumstances.

Match Support

To ensure a happy, productive relationship is developing between the volunteer and the young person, communication with the Program is essential. We encourage you to keep in regular contact with your Program worker to discuss any concerns and provide information on the progress of the friendship.

Cost

Volunteer Big Brothers and Big Sisters give freely of themselves and of their time. They also cover any transport costs to and from outings and pay their own way to any match activities. We therefore ask 'Little Brothers' and 'Little Sisters' to contribute to pay their own entrance fees to movies, football games, swimming etc. and to consider alternative, cost free outings if funds are limited.

Simple, informal and inexpensive activities that the volunteer and young person can enjoy doing together are seen as the best means of establishing a healthy relationship.

Despite the fact that our resources are limited, we make every effort to respond to the needs of the young people referred to the Program.

We hope that this information clarified some of the queries you might have. If you have any further questions, please contact BBBS Senior Program Worker Petrina Hare on 5221 4466. Thank you for your interest in the Big Brothers – Big Sisters Program.