



The  
Grammar  
School  
Nicosia



# GS BUDDIES POLICY

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The Grammar School Nicosia

# The Grammar School GS Buddies

## Purpose

The GS Buddy System supports the successful integration and well-being of all new students at The Grammar School. It fosters a sense of belonging, promotes student leadership, and builds a caring and inclusive school environment through peer mentoring and regular social engagement.

## Who it Applies To

- **All Year 1 students** (new or existing)
- **Newcomers from any other grade** (Years 2–7)
- **Any student** already enrolled who feels they need additional support during the year may also **request a buddy** via the online form (accessible through a QR code posted around school and on the website)

## Buddy Mentors

- **Eligibility:** All students from **Year 2 to Year 7** may volunteer to become Buddy Mentors.
- **Screening:** A committee of Buddy Mentor Teachers reviews all applications. Students with ongoing or unresolved behavioural or disciplinary issues may not be approved. Final acceptance is determined by the Headmasters.
- **Confirmation:** Accepted students receive an official **congratulatory digital letter**.
- **Parental Consent:** SMS messages are sent to the parents/guardians of both newcomers and mentors explaining the program. The message includes a link to a **consent form**, which both sets of guardians must complete before participation.

## Training & Preparation

- All Buddy Mentors attend a **training session** led by the School Counsellor before Orientation Day.
- Training includes:
  - A presentation on expectations and boundaries
  - A workshop with role-playing scenarios
  - A printed and digital **Buddy Mentor Guide**

## Identification

Buddy Mentors wear a **school-issued wristband** throughout the academic year so they can be easily identified and approached by newcomers.

## Orientation Day

- New students are **paired randomly** with their Buddy Mentor.
- A **matching switch** may be requested by either student if the match is not a good fit. Requests are made privately to the Teacher in charge. Students, both newcomers and Buddy Mentors, will be informed during the training and Orientation Day that, since the matching is done randomly, their assigned pair may not be the right fit. As a result, changes may be made throughout the year if necessary.
- Buddy Mentors and new students **rotate together** through Orientation stations, led by PE teachers and sponsors.
- At the end of the day, all students enjoy a **social event by the swimming pool**, with:
  - Swimming
  - Music
  - Snacks
  - Opportunities to mingle in a relaxed setting

## Role of Buddy Mentor Teachers

Each Buddy Mentor Teacher oversees a small group (approximately 3 mentors and 9 newcomers) and:

- **Facilitates introductions** and group bonding on Orientation Day
- **Meets with their group at least once a month** to monitor progress
- **Checks in regularly** with Buddy Mentors to ensure the system is functioning smoothly
- **Guides** and **supports** students accordingly
- **Reports concerns** or issues to the School Counsellor as needed. The Counsellor informs the **GS Buddy System Coordination Team**, which consists of the Headmasters and members of the Professional Development Team.
- **Encourages participation** in events and supports buddy-related activities throughout the year.

## Ongoing Weekly Check-ins

- Buddy Mentors and their assigned newcomers **check in weekly** at the school library for an informal catch-up. These meetings are **logged**.
- Any **additional communication** outside school hours is optional. If students choose not to exchange personal contact details, they may communicate via **Microsoft Teams**.

## Responsibilities of the Buddy Mentor

Buddy Mentors:

- Offer **emotional and social support** to their assigned newcomer
- **Introduce** school life, events (e.g. Talent Show, Cultural Evening), and clubs
- Provide **study tips** and help with navigating the school

- **Report** signs of social exclusion, bullying, or distress to their assigned teacher
- Model respectful and inclusive behavior

## Grounds for Removal

Any violation of school policies, or behaviour deemed inappropriate by the Buddy Mentor Coordination Team, may result in the immediate removal of a student from the Buddy System. Participation in the programme is a privilege that requires responsibility, respect, and commitment to the values of our school.

## Social & Special Events

Two official **Buddy System events** take place during the academic year to strengthen peer relationships. These may include:

- Halloween Party
- Beach day
- Paintball or laser tag
- Bowling
- Escape room
- Trampoline park or ropes course
- On-campus movie night with snacks
- Cultural scavenger hunt

Activities are selected through student votes and organized by the Buddy Team with teacher guidance.

## Evaluation & Recognition

- At the end of the academic year, all **Buddy Mentors and newcomers evaluate the system**, sharing feedback on its effectiveness.
- All Buddy Mentors receive a **Certificate of Participation** for their role and contribution.

## Library as a Safe Space

- The **school library** serves as a designated safe space for **any student feeling lonely or in need of support**.
- A teacher is always present during breaks to supervise and engage with students.
- Various **games and activities** are available to help students relax, make friends, and feel included.

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