



## Creating a buddy system for a successful recruitment campaign

The buddy system is one of the methods that could be implemented during and after the Membership Recruitment Campaign in your NSO to better support the integration of new youth members. This short guide will allow NSOs to support their local groups in better understanding why it is relevant to provide peer support and how to facilitate the buddy system within the Scout group. It is designed for youth members but may be adapted for adult volunteers too, on both national and local levels. Encourage your groups to use the buddy system and provide this simple and short framework to set it up.

### Why have a buddy system between youth members?

The buddy system is a peer-to-peer support system often implemented between young people from the same group. Having a buddy brings many benefits, especially for newcomers because:

- It offers a landmark in a new environment, someone able to answer questions and further explain different elements of the Scouting experience
- It provides someone to talk to and share their personal reflections and feelings with
- It gives support to local group leaders to share the support of newcomers with other experienced members of the group
- It empowers existing local group members in sharing their experience and developing leadership and mentorship skills

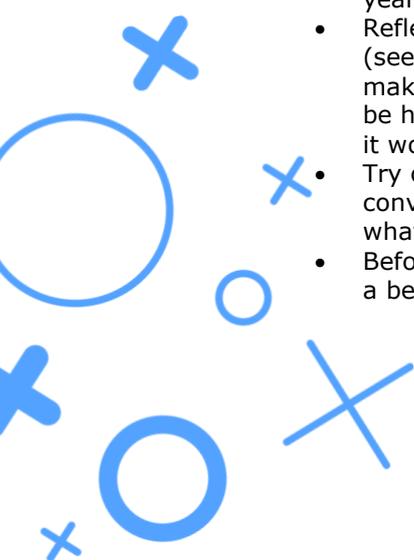
At the local group level it implies to:

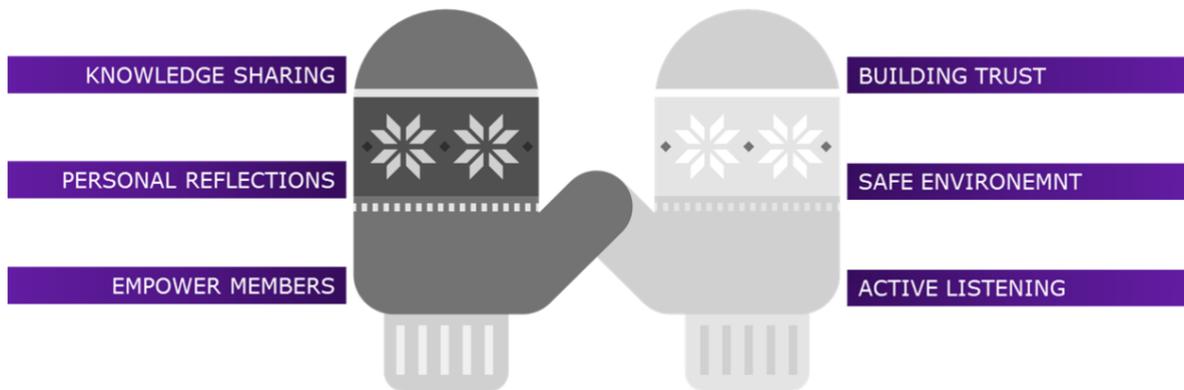
- Have a system within the Unit to build a stronger safe environment between young people
- Have a reference for the leaders to check on the buddies to get an overview of the state of mind of the unit
- Build trust amongst young people and with the adult leaders
- Have faster integration & better understanding of unwritten practices and agreements within the group

### How to create a buddy system in your unit

Creating a buddy system requires taking the following steps:

- Define within the adult leaders' team the specific rationale behind the buddy system that they will share with the Scouts
- Decide how to divide the group in buddies. It can be based on the age, experience, gender, friendship or other characteristic. It can be also decided that young people choose their buddies. If so, make sure the system is entirely inclusive and leaves no one behind.
- Decide on when to launch the buddy system and the length of the experience depending on the reality of your Unit. Is the buddy system set for a couple of months or a full year?
- Reflect on how the buddy system will be implemented in your meetings or weekends (see the section below). Is it in a formal way or in a more informal way? How do you make sure the system is actually being put to practice between young people? It may be helpful to have a visual explanation that illustrates the buddy system, explaining how it works for young people.
- Try out the buddy system with your existing members first - practice one-on-one conversations, explore activities that can be done together with a new buddy, discuss what topics and questions the new members may have.
- Before the launch, communicate with parents about the buddy system to help them gain a better understanding of the concept and the rationale behind it.





## How to implement the buddy system

- Start by a small kick-off moment at one of your ordinary meetings during which you would explain and present the buddy system to the local group members. Make sure the 'matching' process is inclusive and transparent, whichever way you choose to pair up the Scouts. You can turn this into an exciting activity!
- Set up a game plan. Together with your members, decide on the ground rules of the system. For example - respect each other; actively listen; be proactive in proposing activities and so on. It is important that everyone is on board and that the more experienced Scout buddies understand their new responsibilities.
- At the very beginning of the new Scout's journey, it is important that buddies are proactively engaged and have regular check-ins each week or two. With time, the check-ins and activities can become more seldom, depending on the individual needs and agreement between the buddies.
- You may need to boost up the energy while facilitating the buddy system - some nudges may be needed along the way. It is natural that some of the members may be reluctant or simply shy to connect or find ways to engage with their new buddies. Bring some energy in by asking Scouts in your ordinary meetings on what have they done together with their buddy, foster reflection & sharing culture.

## TIPS FOR BUDDY ACTIVITIES

Go on a hike or a walk by learning how to use a map and a compass	Write each other a letter and send it by post
Visit a heritage place in your location	Propose and organise an activity for the whole Scout group (sharing responsibilities with the new Scout)
Explore Scouting literature to discuss	Do a good deed everyday and share about it with your buddy
Agree on a goal to reach together or individually, and check in on each other (take up a leadership role in the next event, learn a new knot..)	Learn a new Scouting game or a song, run it in your group

## Review and follow-up

- Decide on a milestone that will serve as a critical point in your trail - is it going well? is everyone involved in the buddy system? are there any conflicts? do new members feel supported? If yes - you are on the right track! If there are any obstacles on the way, take a closer look at how the system may be improved and what support is needed.





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- Do not forget to include Scouts in the review process - let them drive the reflection, review the ground rules - are they being followed? Is there anything new that should be agreed and followed as a good practice?
- You may consider setting up a goal that the buddy system becomes a second nature of the group. It may become a positive habit that your members proactively engage with any new Scouts and create pairs on their own through the buddy system.

