



Code of Practice for UCD Buddy Programme for Parents

The Buddy Programme for Parents plays a vital role in UCD. Buddies provide informal support and advice to employees who are preparing to go on leave and those returning from leave on balancing family life with their career. This code of practice acts as a guide for the role of the buddies.

Section I: What is a Buddy?

1. Role Definition

A buddy is a UCD employee who has experience of being a parent. The role of the buddy is to be a confidential informal support and listening ear for an employee preparing for parenthood or is recently balancing work and family commitments.

This could take the form of an informal coffee, an email or a call.

Buddies can support employees in the following ways:

- Share their experience and useful tips
- Connect employees with other supports and resources

Employees may have questions for buddies about preparing to go on leave, transitioning back into the workplace, being a new parent and balancing workload, childcare arrangements, etc.

Please note: Buddies are an informal support. Buddies are not a replacement for professional services and supports. Buddies should refer employees to HR and University policies to ensure consistent, up-to-date and accurate information. The commitment to treat information with complete confidentiality however cannot be absolute where there may be a risk of suicide, threat to life or potential harm to another party¹.

In these instances, the Buddy will need to seek advice immediately as to how to proceed in these circumstances from relevant parties.

Sources of information and contact points include:

¹ Please note if you are a mandated person under the [Children First Act 2015](#) you have a responsibility to report abuse. See the list of mandated persons [here](#).



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit
- HR Partner
- Safety, Insurance, Operational Risk and Compliance (SIRC) Office
- Employee Relations, UCD Legal Office
- and/or the Employee Assistance Programme.

Employees can contact a buddy via the Parent's page on the EDI website.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Unit provides a co-ordinating and facilitator role for the panel, as well as being a source of support for buddies.

The following outlines the key responsibilities of a Buddy:

- To act as a contact for an employee preparing for parenthood and/or transitioning to being a working parent
- To act as a contact for a period of 12 months or for as long as both parties are happy to consent to continuing the engagement
- To listen and provide informal support and advice
- Refer employees to University policies
- To sign-post employees to information sources and services as appropriate
- To complete the relevant monitoring forms for statistical purposes only, and to submit

There are certain characteristics that a Buddy would be expected to have in order to carry out the role effectively. These include the following:

- Approachable, respected and trusted
- Ability to listen
- Calm and empathetic
- Non-judgemental, unbiased and objective
- Supportive

2. Meetings

i. Contact with Employees

The following are considerations when keeping in touch with an employee:



- Type of communication: what format?
- How often (meeting, call, email, a mixture) A minimum of one meeting a month is suggested.
- Meetings should take place during working hours in a suitable venue to be agreed by both.
- In the first instance the Buddy should set out the remit of their role with the employee.
- Please check with your manager about time commitments.

ii. Meetings of the Buddy Panel

Panel meetings are structured in the following way:

- The panel will normally meet 1-2 times a year on campus. The meetings will usually last one hour (approx) and normally take place during lunchtime hours.
- The meetings will be facilitated by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion unit.
- Meetings can include, feedback, briefings, lunch and learns, case studies, group work etc.
- Strict confidentiality must be maintained at all times, with no identifying details of any employee being given.²

3. Briefing and Support

Buddies will receive a briefing session at the outset that will provide them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to carry out their role in an effective manner. On completion of this briefing the Panel will:

- Be aware of the relevant features of the UCD Parents webpage.
- Understand the role and responsibilities of the Buddy, the boundaries of the role, and have developed the skills to carry out the role in an effective manner.
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders supporting employees: i.e. Managers, UCD HR, EDI Unit.
- Understand the various resources and supports in UCD and externally available.
- Understand the boundaries of confidentiality.
- Have an awareness of the Employee Assistance Programme as a source of support.

² The commitment to treat information with complete confidentiality however cannot be absolute where there may be a risk of suicide, threat to life or potential harm to another party. In these instances the Buddy will need to seek advice immediately as to how to proceed in these circumstances from relevant parties. Sources of information include: Safety, Insurance, Operational Risk and Compliance (SIRC) Office, Organisation Design and Diversity Unit, HR Partner, Employee Relations Programmes Office, UCD Legal Office and/or the Employee Assistance Programme.



- Have developed listening, advisory and support skills.
- Sign-post a parent who is having difficulty with an aspect of parenthood, a crisis pregnancy, an adoption fall-through, an ill or fatal foetal abnormality or still-birth, or post-natal depression.

Section II: Becoming a Parenting Buddy

4. Registering to be a Parenting Buddy

A call will be circulated to UCD employees with an application form to register to become a Buddy.

UCD seeks to attain the broadest spectrum of parents to be buddies from the University for appointment to the Panel.

The EDI Unit will endeavour to ensure that buddies are diverse and represent the following grounds:

- Diverse parents: gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, race, civil status, family status, disability, religion, socio-economic status
- Various levels of the organisation
- A broad range of schools/units
- faculty and staff
- good gender representation

A panel will review the application form and you will receive confirmation from the EDI Unit if you have been selected to be a Buddy. Your photo, a short bio about you and your contact details will be visible on the UCD EDI website. Employees who wish to find a buddy can contact you directly.

If due to other commitments or a situation has arisen whereby the Buddy is not in a position to continue to fully carry out their duties, the Buddy should notify the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and request time off or withdraw from the panel.

If you are already acting as a Buddy and do not have the time to be a Buddy to another employee, invite them to contact another Buddy on the list and you should also make contact with the EDI Unit edi@ucd.ie to ensure they get paired with someone.