



## Volunteer Opportunity: Assisting with Child Protection Hotline to support young students in the student2student program



### About the program:

The student2student (s2s) program is an evidence based, reading program that helps to improve the reading skills of younger students by pairing them up with an older Buddy, who peer reads with them.

Evidence indicates that one of the best ways to support students who have reading difficulties is for the help to come from others near their own age. s2s pairs students who are behind in their reading age with trained Buddies (typically high school students) who work with them to improve their reading skills. The mentoring is provided over the phone or online, via a website called Chatty Kids, with the pair reading from the same book.

Reading pairs are expected to read 2-3 times per week, between 4 – 7pm during the week and on weekends from 10am- 4 pm for 20 min at a time. The program runs for approximately 18 weeks in total. We have two cycles of the program each year and over 1400 pairs involved.

s2s operates in every State and Territory in Australia. It is a flagship program of The Smith Family, and has been implemented for more than 15 years, with consistently high outcomes for our students. In 2020, 94% of participating students improved their reading age and 71% doubled their reading progress<sup>1</sup>.

### Child safety in s2s:

As a child safe organisation, there are several measures already in place to promote safety to all participants, including thorough training for students and parents, and a contact number for participants or their parents to contact in the event of a child protection incident. Children often set up to read to each other on weekends and we have set up an out of hours child protection hotline in the event of an incident at these times.

Since inception, there have been very few child safety issues come to light in s2s and are often non-critical in nature, relating to a Buddy feeling uncomfortable with, for example, a parent shouting in the background or a Reader disclosing that they are being bullied.

### The need:

While the use of the out of hours child protection hotline by our students has been rare, we need to ensure that there is a contact point in the event that an incident does occur. To support that we are seeking volunteers to cover this service on the weekends (Friday evening to Sunday).

The responsibilities of a volunteer assisting with this hotline will include:

- Obtaining relevant Working with Children clearance checks for their state in line with our child protection policies
- Attending brief training to be provided by The Smith Family understand role expectations, learning how to identify critical vs non-critical child safety issues, and knowing how to respond
- Utilising own mobile device and keeping it switched on over the course of the rostered weekend to answer any calls from 10 am – 5pm.
- Calling child protection authorities if a critical issue is reported to you
- Report to the s2s Program Manager if any calls were made to the hotline on your rostered weekend.

The s2s program will be taking place between 2<sup>nd</sup> May – 28<sup>th</sup> of October this year, depending on uptake we anticipate that volunteers will be rostered 1-2 weekends in total throughout the course of the program.

To express your interest in this volunteer opportunity, please contact Paula Tinker at [paula.tinker@thesmithfamily.com.au](mailto:paula.tinker@thesmithfamily.com.au) or 0481482932.

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<sup>1</sup> The Smith Family (2020) *student2student Outcomes Report Summary*.