Our Commitment to Military Students

The Cougar Buddies Program is designed to support military-connected students as they transition into our school community. Recognizing that frequent moves and new environments can create uncertainty and anxiety, this program pairs each new military student with a student leader and/or a current military-connected peer.

Cougar Buddies serve as guides and role models, helping new students navigate the school setting, understand routines and expectations, and quickly build connections with classmates.
By offering immediate friendship and support, the program aims to ease the transition process, reduce stress, and promote a strong start for every child.

Through Cougar Buddies, we strive to ensure that every student feels welcomed, valued, and an integral part of the culture of our school from the very first day. This initiative reflects our commitment to fostering belonging, stability, and academic and social success for all students.

All Cougar Buddies must complete the checklist when meeting new students.

1. Preparation Before meeting a new student
   - Learn the school map and key locations (classrooms, cafeteria, library, offices, etc.).
   - Review your assigned new students and their schedules.
   - Prepare a friendly introduction and ice-breaker questions.
   - Gather necessary materials (maps, schedules, school handouts).

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2. Welcome & Introduction
- Greet new students warmly and introduce yourself.
- Explain your role as a peer helper.
- Make the student feel comfortable and included.
- Do: Smile, use the student's name, and speak clearly.
- Don't: Overwhelm the student with too much information at once.

3. Campus Tour
- Show all major areas of the school (classrooms, cafeteria, gym, library, nurse, offices).
- Explain safety procedures and emergency exits.
- Point out lockers, restrooms, and student resources.
- Do: Walk at a pace that allows the student to follow comfortably.
- Don't: Leave the student behind or rush the tour.

4. Academic Support
- Help the student read and understand their schedule.
- Escort the student to each classroom on the first day.
- Explain locker use, school technology, and supplies.
- Do: Offer guidance without completing tasks for them.
- Don't: Give wrong directions or guesses—if unsure, ask staff.

5. Social Integration
- Introduce the student to classmates, teachers, and staff.
- Invite them to join lunch tables, clubs, or activities.
- Encourage participation in school events.
- Do: Be inclusive and patient.
- Don't: Assume the student will approach others on their own.

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6. Communication & Encouragement
   - Answer questions respectfully and honestly.
   - Share personal tips about adjusting to school.
   - Check in with the student throughout the first week.
   - Do: Listen actively and encourage questions.
   - Don't: Ignore concerns or give negative comments.

7. Connection to Resources
   - Introduce the Military Family Life Counselor (MFLC) and counseling office.
   - Explain available student support services.
   - Encourage students to ask for help when needed.
   - Do: Provide accurate contact points for support.
   - Don't: Overpromise help you cannot provide.

HAVE FUN AND MAKE A NEW FRIEND WHILE YOU ARE AT IT!

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