



# Buddy Program Handbook





# Table Of Contents



Getting Started

04



Program Requirements

06



Code of Conduct

08



Conversation Starters

09





# Table Of Contents



Activity Checklist

11



Navigating Differences

16



Additional Resources

19



Emergency Contact Information

20





# Getting Started

## → Program Description

The ISSS Buddy Program aims to connect incoming students with local peers, foster a sense of belonging, and encourage cultural exchange to enrich the Emory campus community.

During this semester together, you will have an opportunity to:

- Foster an environment of cultural sharing and exchange
- Find a stronger sense of belonging and make lasting connections with your peers
- Navigate new challenges and questions together
- Breach the “Emory bubble” and encourage engagement in the wider community



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## → Roles and Responsibilities

- Be an excellent buddy - A good buddy actively listens and supports their mentee in various experiences. Both the mentor and mentee should mutually contribute to the partnership.
- Have curiosity and respect - Embracing each other's cultures fosters understanding and enriches the buddy experience.
- Be an active participant - Buddies should engage in events and activities to strengthen their connection and network.





# What is the Buddy Program



## Buddy Program is...

- A great way to make friends and expand your social engagement
- An avenue for exploring Emory and the wider community
- An opportunity for cultural exchange and increasing intercultural awareness



## Buddy Program is not...

- An immigration advising service
- A tutor/editor/academic advisor
- A spiritual conversion tool
- A taxi service
- A dating service
- A therapist service
- An ATM



# Buddy Program Requirements

1

Attend the Program Orientation, Meet & Greet Social, and Wrap-Up Social

- Orientation and Meet & Greet Social – September 14, 2026
- Wrap-Up Social: December 4, 2026

2

Meet with your Buddy

- Buddies are expected to meet at least 2 times a month during the semester-long program.

3

Complete at least 3 activities together

4

### Maintain Communication

- It's important to stay connected throughout the program. Use what communication method works best for both of you. (Examples: WhatsApp, WeChat, SMS, etc.)

5

Complete your end-of-semester evaluation



# Buddy Program Requirements

?

Reach out to ISSS if you need help or guidance:

- Primary Contact: Ford Johnson, [RJOHN40@emory.edu](mailto:RJOHN40@emory.edu), 404-727-5303
- If you have any general questions or concerns, please contact us at [iss@emory.edu](mailto:iss@emory.edu) or 404-727-3300. We are here to help!



# Code of Conduct

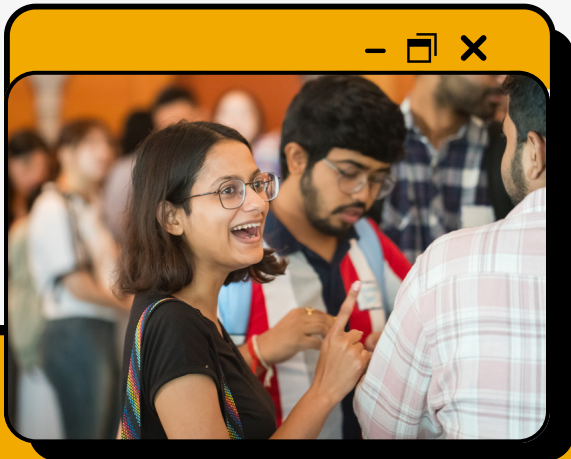


To create an environment of engagement, learning, respect, and safety in the ISSS Buddy Program, we require participants to review, agree to, and abide by the following statements:

- I will be an active participant in the ISSS Buddy Program by attending required events/activities and staying in contact with my assigned buddy throughout the semester.
- I will treat my buddy and all program participants with respect, dignity, and fairness at all times.
- I will remain respectful when navigating differences (including differences in culture, language, personality, religion, etc.) with my buddy and other members of the ISSS Buddy Program.
- I will respect my buddy's privacy and keep personal information shared within the program confidential unless my buddy explicitly gives consent to share it.
- I will report any behavior that makes me or others feel unsafe to program coordinators.



# Let's start the Conversation



Sometimes, starting a conversation is the hardest part about getting to know someone. If you find yourself struggling to choose a topic, consider some of these suggestions.

## → Your Time at Emory.

- Why did you decide to come to Emory?
- What are you most excited for during your time at Emory?
- How do you think you will adapt while at Emory?
- What is one thing you are looking forward to experiencing at Emory?
- Have you experienced any moments of culture shock so far?
- What are some differences you've noticed between your home culture and Atlanta's regional culture?

## → Your Culture

- What are the major holidays or festivals in your culture?
- What music, movie, or TV show would you recommend?
- What is something about your hometown that people might not know if they have never visited there before?





## → Your Personality

- What is the most recent place you traveled, either within your home country or internationally? Why did you choose that destination?
- Which US city do you want to visit the most while you're in the United States?
- If you could meet one person (living or dead), who would it be? Why?
- What is the best advice you have ever heard?
- How do you deal with stress?
- What do you like to do on rainy days?
- Do you have any hidden talents?
- What is something you have always wanted to try but still haven't?
- If you were a superhero and could have one superpower, what would it be?
- What is your dream job?
- What would you like to be known for?



Explore questions of genuine curiosity after your buddy answers their question!





# Activity Ideas



Don't let deciding on activities to do with your buddy stress you out! Take some of our suggestions for easy opportunities to connect with your buddy.

Check them off as you do them and see how many you can complete!

## Icon Legend:

- ◆ Free with Emory Student ID
- \* Student Discount Available with Student ID



# Be an Eagle!

- ☐ Cheer on an Emory sports team
- ☐ Attend an [International Community Friday Lunch](#) or Coffee Hour
- ☐ Take photos at the Emory gate
- ☐ Grab a coffee/tea on campus
- ☐ [Attend a group fitness class](#) or work out together at Emory WoodPEC♦
- ☐ Check out one of the tables at [Wonderful Wednesday](#)
- ☐ Have lunch at one of the [dining halls](#) on campus
- ☐ Attend a [Windows to the World](#) event
- ☐ Explore the [Emory Farmers Market](#)
- ☐ Rent out a video game or board game from the [Cox Hall Computing Center](#)♦
- ☐ Attend a show at [Emory Schwartz Center](#)\*
- ☐ Visit the [Carlos Museum](#)♦
- ☐ Study at one of [Emory's libraries](#)
- ☐ Attend [Global Festival](#) or host a table
- ☐ Explore Lullwater Park: Main Entrance at 1463 Clifton Rd NE Atlanta, GA 30329
- ☐ [Check out a student club or campus organization](#)
- ☐ Attend an event from the [Emory Events Calendar](#)





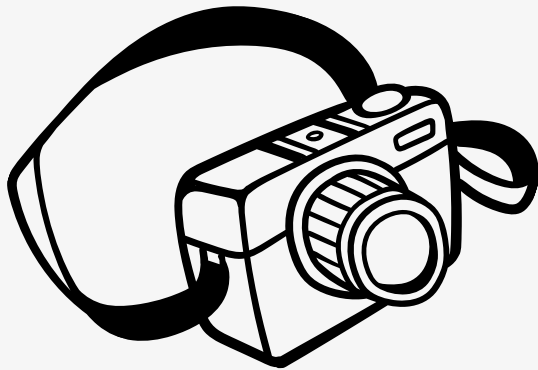
Be a

Local!



- ☐ Little Five Points
- ☐ Downtown Decatur
- ☐ East Atlanta Village
- ☐ Oakland Cemetery
- ☐ West End
- ☐ Piedmont Park
- ☐ Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
- ☐ Krog Street
- ☐ Grant Park
- ☐ Virginia Highland
- ☐ Buford Highway

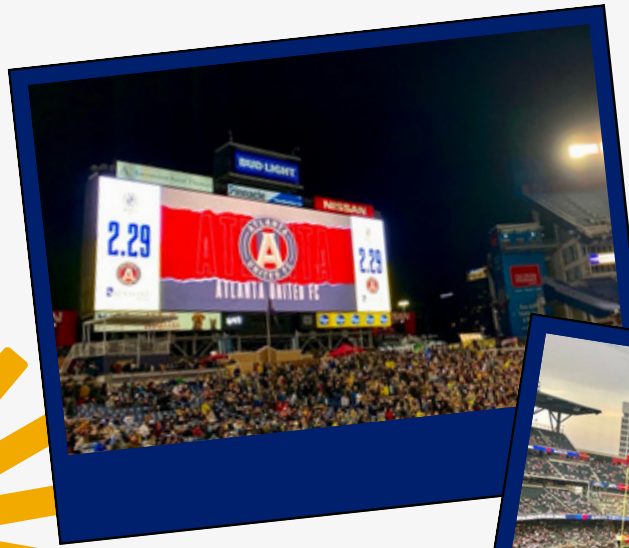




# Be a Tourist!

- ☐ Georgia Aquarium\*
- ☐ World of Coca-Cola
- ☐ National Center for Civil and Human Rights
- ☐ High Museum of Art ♦
- ☐ Atlanta Botanical Garden
- ☐ Centennial Olympic Park
- ☐ The Fox Theatre
- ☐ Ponce City Market
- ☐ Fernbank\*
- ☐ Zoo Atlanta\*
- ☐ Skyview Ferris Wheel\*
- ☐ Atlanta History Museum\*





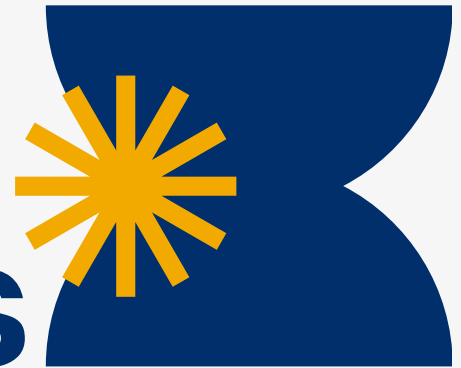
- ☐ Atlanta United (Soccer)
- ☐ Atlanta Falcons  
(American football)
- ☐ Atlanta Braves  
(Baseball)
- ☐ Atlanta Dreams  
(Women's basketball)
- ☐ Atlanta Hawks  
(Basketball)
- ☐ Atlanta Motor  
Speedway (NASCAR)
- ☐ Atlanta Open (Tennis)

Be a  
Fan!





# Navigating Differences



Are you nervous about cultural, communication, and personality differences between you and your buddy? Don't worry! This helpful guide will provide you with a starting point and reference material.

Be aware of:



## Cultural Differences

- Eye contact
- Touch
- Clothing
- Personal space
- Food
- Concepts of time
- Formality
- Cultural values



## Communication Differences

- Language
- Greetings
- Hand gestures
- Tone of voice
- Directness/ Indirectness
- Non-verbal signals



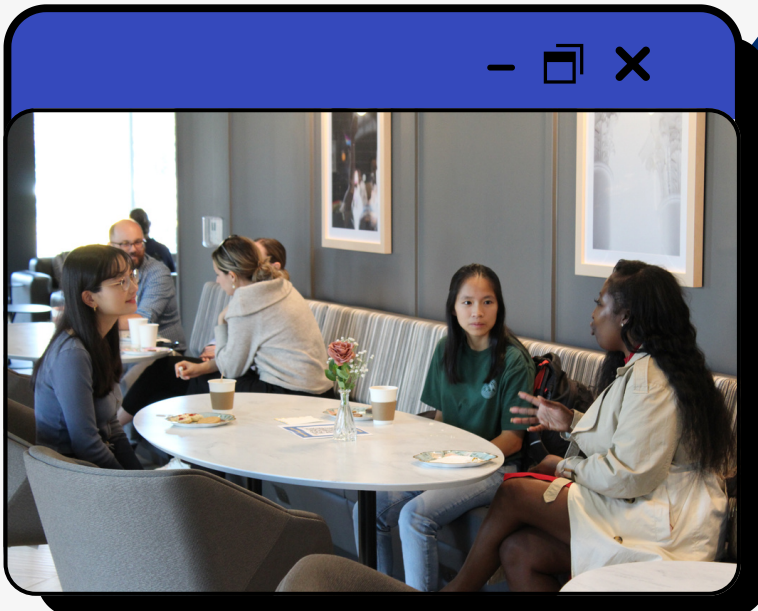
## Personality Differences

- Introversion/Extroversion
- Hobbies
- Openness: Curiosity/Caution
- Conflict resolution



## Sensitive Topics

- Politics
- Gender
- Race
- Sexuality
- Religion
- Health/Disabilities





# Tips & Best Practices

- Practice self-awareness. Be mindful of your own identities, privileges, biases, cultural lens, and background.
- Remain open-minded and willing to consider other perspectives.
- Try to withhold judgment on behaviors that seem strange to you – including gestures, eye contact and greeting rituals.
- Be curious and ask polite questions. Genuinely seek to understand.
- Be flexible and willing to adjust your approach and behavior.
- Don't be so afraid of making mistakes that you avoid conversations.
- Be mindful of stereotyping.
- Stay calm and respectful.
- Stay positive and don't make fun of or speak ill of those who are different.
- Educate yourself on other cultures.



# Additional Resources

**International Student and Scholar Services**

<https://iss.s.emory.edu/>

**Emory Housing**

<https://housing.emory.edu/>

**Emory Student Health**

<https://studenthealth.emory.edu/>

**Emory Counseling and Psychological Services**

<https://counseling.emory.edu/>

**Emory Transportation**

<https://transportation.emory.edu/>

**Emory Dining**

<https://dining.emory.edu/>

**Emory Student Center**

<https://studentcenter.emory.edu/>

**The Hub**

[https://thehub.emory.edu/home\\_login](https://thehub.emory.edu/home_login)

**Emory Police**

<https://police.emory.edu/>

**Emory Events Calendar**

<https://www.emory.edu/home/events/index.html>

**Office of Spiritual and Religious Life**

<https://religiouslife.emory.edu/>





# Emergency Contact Information

We want to ensure that everyone in the buddy program stays safe while having fun, getting to know their buddy, and engaging in cultural exchange.

If you encounter an emergency, please refer to the following emergency contact numbers:

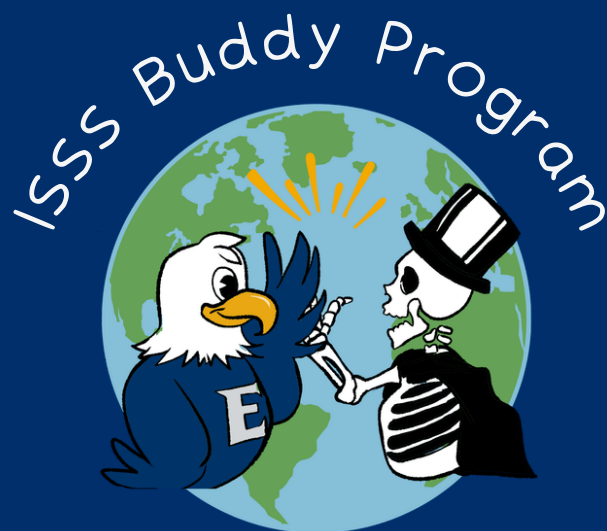
United States' General Emergency Phone Number: **911**

- This will work anywhere in the United States and can be used for any type of emergency.



Emory Police Department (EPD) Phone Number: **404-727-6111**

- If you experience an emergency on campus, we recommend calling EPD's phone number first as they will be able to respond to your emergency more quickly than if you dial 911.



EMORY  
UNIVERSITY

International Student  
and Scholar Services