



MENTOR GUIDELINES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

CONGRATULATIONS! As a mentor, you are now about to begin one of life's most rewarding and fulfilling experiences. Your commitment indicates that you believe in young people. You recognize the magnitude of the responsibility that you accepted in choosing to work with youth and agree to interact appropriately with your student according to the highest ethical standards at all times.

Be yourself! Please read the following guidelines carefully.

Your Role as a Mentor:

- At the initial stages of the match, your student may appear to be hesitant, unresponsive, and unappreciative of the mentor relationship. This guarded attitude is simply a manifestation of his/her insecurity about the relationship. The student's attitude will gradually take a positive turn as he/she realizes your sincerity about being a friend. *Be patient!* Don't try to speed up the process by going out of your way to accommodate your student, such as seeing your student more than the prescribed one hour per week.
- Remember that the mentor–student relationship has an initial phase. During this phase the student is more interested in getting to know how “real” you are and how much he/she can trust you. Establish how you can reach your student: by phone, e-mail, or fax, or at a designated meeting location. Experience proves that calling or e-mailing your student at school is usually the best way to make contact. Establish a time and phone number where you can usually answer calls or make contact. Students need encouragement to leave messages on your voicemail to confirm meetings as well as to cancel them.
- Don't try to be teacher, parent, disciplinarian, therapist, Santa Claus or babysitter. Experience demonstrates it is counterproductive to assume roles other than a dependable, consistent friend. Present information carefully without distortion and give all points of view a fair hearing. Listen carefully and offer possible solutions without passing judgment. Don't criticize or preach. Think of ways to problem solve together rather than lecturing or telling the student what to do. Never “should of” your student.
- Respect the uniqueness and honor the integrity of your student and influence him/her through constructive feedback. The mentor empowers the student to make right decisions without actually deciding for the student. Identify the student's interests and take them seriously. Be alert for opportunities and teaching moments. Explore positive and negative consequences.
- Set realistic expectations and goals for your student and make achievement for them fun. Remember there is a big difference between *encouraging* and *demanding*. Encourage your student to complete his/her secondary education and pursue higher learning or vocational

goals; provide access to varying points of view. Assist in making the connection between his/her actions of today and the dreams and goals of tomorrow. Don't get discouraged if the student isn't turning his/her life around or making great improvements. Mentors have a great deal of impact; it's not always immediately evident. Look for signs such as increased school attendance, improved grades, showing up for meetings and expressing appreciation.

Courtesy of California Governor's Mentoring Partnership.

- As a friend you can share and advise, but know your limitations. Problems that your student may share with you regarding substance abuse, molestation and physical abuse are best handled by professionals. If you have any concerns, *contact the mentor coordinator immediately*.
- Be supportive of the parent, even when you may disagree. Don't take sides or make judgments concerning any family conflict or situation. Leave the parenting to the parent.

Discipline:

There may be instances when your student's behavior is unacceptable. Again, remember the parent is responsible for the child's discipline. The following guidelines are to be used if the parent is not around to assume the responsibility for the child's behavior. Don't forget to inform the parent about the steps you took and why you took them.

- Never physically discipline.
- Never use abusive language.
- Don't use ultimatums.
- Most children will listen and respond to reason. Explain to your student why you find his/her behavior unacceptable.
- Don't give your student the silent treatment to solve the problem. Discuss your concerns.
- On very rare occasions, your child may need to be taken back home because of unacceptable behavior. Before taking this action, tell him/her what you are doing and why you made the decision. Taking your student back home because of his/her behavior doesn't necessarily mean the match (relationship) has ended. Before you leave make sure the child understands he/she will see you again and that you are not using his/her behavior as a pretext to abandon the relationship.

Health and Safety:

Protect the health and safety of your student and seek advice from school faculty or program staff whenever in doubt about the appropriateness of an event or activity and inform school or program staff of any persons, situations or activities that could affect the health and safety of the child.

- Do not use alcohol, tobacco or drugs when with your student.
- Do not have firearms or weapons present while with your student.

- Always wear seat belts while in the car.
- Have adequate personal liability and automobile insurance coverage.
- Ensure your student has all the necessary protective items and is well supervised on outings.

Courtesy of California Governor's Mentoring Partnership.

- Do not leave your student alone or with strangers.
- If you have become aware that your student's safety or the safety of another is in jeopardy through disclosure (e.g., child abuse, sexual abuse), report your concern to the mentor coordinator or teacher immediately. Let your student know that you are required to do so. This requirement should always be discussed at the beginning of the relationship to inform the student of your obligation to report safety concerns.

Activities and Money:

- Taking the first step in planning activities is primarily your responsibility; however, ask your student to help make decisions or have him/her plan an activity.
- The mentor–student match is a one-on-one relationship that takes time to build. Try to avoid bringing someone else when you are with your student. However, you may include others (e.g., spouse, friends, other students/mentors and relatives) from time to time.
- Whereas this program is mainly to assist your student with career exploration, tutoring, and self-esteem, there may be activities that you want to attend that cost money. Consult with your student about cost and find out how he/she will pay. You can assist him/her in paying his/her share, but we encourage you to discuss costs of activities with the parents.
- Entertainment is not the focal point of your relationship. Do not spend an exorbitant amount of money for activities, birthday presents, and so on.
- Always call your student before your scheduled meeting or appointment to remind him/her. Be sure you have parental approval for activities that take place away from school premises.
- Return your student home at the agreed-upon time. If you are unable to or there is a change in plans, always call the parent to let him/her know.

Program Rules:

- No overnight stays.
- Discussions between you and your student are considered confidential. Be careful about sensitive personal issues. The student's personal or family life may be difficult to discuss, particularly early in the relationship. Your student may be ashamed of poor school performance, family culture and religion, financial problems and so on. It is important not to measure the success of the relationship by the extent of the student's disclosure.
- If you have a concern you feel is beyond your ability to handle, call the mentor coordinator even if it seems trivial. There is no reason to feel helpless or hopeless.

Your Measure of Success:

- Your success is measured by many milestones.

Your student may realize for the first time that he/she . . .	Good indications:
✓ has potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ setting goals ✓ developing new skills ✓ aware of time management
✓ is confident and self-assured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ increased cooperation with parents, teachers and peers ✓ behavioral changes
✓ values education and the learning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ increase in school attendance ✓ improved grades ✓ respect for teachers
✓ is a capable young person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ a willingness to help others ✓ ability to see the future ✓ ability to plan for college

- Your student will reward you through notes, e-mails or simply conversation. He/she may tell you how “great” you are, how you might have helped him/her with a specific problem and so much more. It may be big or small. Whatever the compliment, know that what you are doing has had a significant impact on the future of this child.
- You will work with your student to establish mutual respect, friendship, motivation and measurable goals. Please don’t hesitate to ask questions if you find any part of the guidelines unclear or confusing. The mentor coordinator is available to assist you in any way possible.

Your commitment and dedication to your student may be the most profound opportunity that you experience. The quality of the relationship you build directly influences the life and future of the child. Please exert every effort to maintain professional standards, improve your mentor skills, and exercise good judgment when engaged in any activity involving your student.

Mentoring is not a panacea for all the problems/decisions facing your student and his/her family. The essence of mentoring is the sustained human relationship: a one-on-one relationship that shows a child that he/she is valued as a person and is important to society.

YOU ARE A:

POSITIVE ROLE MODEL
 FRIEND
 COACH
 ADVISOR
 SELF-ESTEEM BUILDER
 CAREER COUNSELOR
 ADVOCATE