



VIRTUAL MENTORING DURING COVID-19 GUIDELINES FOR MENTORING COORDINATORS

Virtual mentoring during this time of physical and social isolation has become a successful way for mentors and mentees to stay in touch. Technology implemented for e-mentoring sessions include email, chats, text messages, telephone, snail mail and video platforms such as FaceTime or Google Hangouts. Many schools have given students their own Google account. Social media outlets are not permitted.

Mentoring programs must ensure maximum protection for both mentors and mentees. Below are 10 Guidelines to assist Mentoring Coordinators in connecting mentors and mentees.

- 1. Obtain written permission from parent/guardian for the sessions to commence.** These can be obtained electronically, verbally, via text or other means. The parent account is preferred rather than a mentee's account whenever possible. Remember the family must have a computer or telephone to connect. School-based mentoring coordinators will need to secure permission from the Superintendent of Schools first.
- 2. Ask mentors to sign a virtual mentoring agreement.** Mentors adhere to the program parameters. Agreement is kept in the mentoring program's file.
- 3. Keep parent and mentor permissions safe and secure as part of the mentor/mentee program's file.** These should include the name and title (parent, guardian, etc.) of persons who granted approval and date along with indicating the date when the first online contact began.
- 4. Assist in determining the best type of online communication for the mentor and mentee.** Some youth will have chrome books; other parents/guardians will indicate a preference for sessions via telephone or other means. Honor parents' preference.
- 5. Take the lead on initial contacts between mentors and mentees.** Prepare mentees for the sessions and clarify any school, mentor or family rules that would limit the mentee's screen time or online availability.
- 6. Troubleshoot and answer questions.** The mentors or mentees might have technical challenges using the platform they have chosen. They may have other issues and concerns.
- 7. Remind mentors of their role.** Mentors focus on giving attention to their mentee. Mentors are a constant in the lives of young people whose lives have, in many cases been turned

upside down. They are not responsible for the entire family, doing errands such as dropping off groceries or answering calls from them. Mentors must set limits on their relationship and time spent with their mentee. Offer many online strategies and activities for match engagement.

8. **Monitor and supervise the virtual matches.** The best method is the same one that mentors have used to report their activities to Mentoring Coordinators in face-to-face programs. All activities should be recorded and kept in the file of the pairs including when each virtual match began and if necessary, ends. Mentoring Coordinators should consider reaching out to the parent/guardian informally to check on status of the match. Always ask how you and the program can help and any issues they are encountering. Notify parent/guardian if mentee is not engaged.
9. **Prohibit use of social media which is not permitted.** (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.). There are serious dangers.
10. **Generate closure if required.** If necessary, a closure form should be signed by mentor and parent/guardian. Keep the forms in the program file of each match.

DISCLAIMER: This material has been created as a template by the Governor's Prevention Partnership. It should not be viewed as the rendering of legal advice. Individual mentoring programs are strongly encouraged to consult their own legal counsel and program policies as well as state/local laws prior to implementing this material designed for virtual mentoring.