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HELPING OUR STUDENTS TO SUCCEED
H.O.S.T.S.
MENTORING PROGRAM

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A FRIENDLY LITTLE HOW-TO GUIDE FOR MENTORING CHILDREN ON THE BRINK OF SUCCESS

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WHAT IS HOSTS?

HOSTS' (Helping Our Students To Succeed) mission is to foster a basic sense of self-concept, to encourage self-reliance and to promote measurable achievement for students.

HOSTS is not an academically based, tutorial program. Yet, HOSTS kids continue to enjoy better grades, attendance and discipline. Why? Because people who feel better about themselves are more successful. And because people like you care enough about someone else's child to spend time with them, Students in the HOSTS program have yet another outlet by which to express their goals, fears and hopes.

Every spring, the HOSTS program will be evaluated by collecting data from campus liaisons, students and mentors. Current data indicates that 91% of students in mentor programs had a decrease in discipline referrals, 84% decreased absences and 89% improved grades. What does this mean? It means that mentoring works!

If you ever wonder how one hour a week could possibly make a difference in the life of a child, just keep this in mind: The hour you spend each week with your HOSTS kid may be the only hour in which the child has the exclusive, uninterrupted, one-on-one attention of an adult.

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

The roles of a mentor are as varied as the mentors themselves. At one time or another, a mentor may serve as a:

Guide
Trusted Friend
Encourager
Teacher
Coach
Listener
Role Model
Goal Setter
Advocate
Tutor
Cheerleader

Though a mentor may be a role model, a true mentor does not ask another person to "be like me." Rather, a mentor says, "I will help you discover who you are and what you wish to be." Thus, a mentor must be committed, having a caring heart and a positive outlook on life.

On the other hand, a mentor is NOT a substitute parent or a spiritual advisor. Although the HOSTS relationship will, in time, evolve into one that is close, mentors must always remember that the ultimate responsibility for, and teaching of, the student lies with his or her parents. A mentor is a team member who, along with parents, teachers and administrators, serves to benefit the child through consistent commitment and compassion.

GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

School Rules

Every campus has rules to ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws and school board policies. These laws and policies are designed to protect and enhance the safety and well being of all individuals, and to prevent even the slightest appearance of impropriety on the part of individual mentors, students and schools participating in the HOSTS program.

Mentoring Sessions

Whenever you are on campus, please sign in when you arrive and sign out when you leave. In compliance with district security regulations, all FBISD staff members and visitors must wear a name badge when on campus. All meetings and activities with your student must take place on the school grounds during the course of the school day. All activities must take place in a room with an open door or on the school grounds in sight of campus staff.

Physical Contact

Many of the students we work with have a strong need and desire for positive physical contact with caring adults. However, physical contact with your HOSTS student should be limited to shaking hands. Please remember that what you see as friendly affection between the student and yourself may be viewed as something entirely different by someone else.

Confidentiality

Any information your student tells you is confidential. However, do not make a promise to a student that you will keep confidential information secret. If a student confides that he or she is the victim of sexual, emotional or physical abuse - or if your student tells you of his or her involvement in any illegal activity - you are required by law to notify your HOSTS liaison immediately. You may then be instructed how to notify the proper authorities.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HOSTS

How much time does mentoring take?

The HOSTS mentor program requires a commitment of one hour a week. We will try to accommodate your busy schedule, and your campus liaison will work with you in every way possible.

I speak a foreign language. Would that be helpful in mentoring?

Absolutely! There are numerous dialects represented in the HOSTS schools, and many of those students need special attention. Please indicate on your mentor application what languages you speak and we will place you accordingly.

Are the parents of HOSTS students told that they are spending time with me, and do they have the option of withdrawing their child from the program whenever they wish?

Once a student agrees to participate in HOSTS, the school informs the parents and gives them information on the type of relationship their child will have with his or her mentor. Written parental approval is required for a student to enter the HOSTS program. If, at any time, parents do not want their son or daughter to participate in HOSTS, they may withdraw them from the program.

What should I do if I cannot keep my HOSTS appointment?

You should notify your HOSTS campus liaison - in advance, if possible - so the student may be informed in a timely manner. If you know far enough in advance (a pre-scheduled business trip or vacation, for example), it's nice to tell your student before hand. Try to make up your missed session as soon as possible by calling your school contact to reschedule.

Is student information confidential?

Yes. All information about your student's personal history is confidential.

What should I do if information I have learned about the student is distressing and I need to speak to someone about the situation?

Even mentors need mentoring from time to time. Please speak to your campus liaison: he or she will be happy to listen to and discuss your concerns.

If an unforeseen event takes place (transfer, job change, change of work schedule, etc.) and I am unable to fulfill my commitment as a mentor, how should I handle the situation with my student?

Contact your campus liaison first. Try to notify the school far enough in advance to allow ample time for the school to prepare the student. Specific procedures must be followed in ending mentor relationships, giving special care to the effect on the student. In some situations, you will be encouraged to visit the student or send a personal letter explaining why you are ending the relationship. Following the recommended steps should help minimize the student's disappointment.

May I take my HOSTS student off campus?

All mentor/student activities must take place on campus. There are no exceptions. This procedure may seem restrictive, but it is in place to protect the student, you and the school, and to maintain the integrity of the HOSTS program.

Are there any topics we should avoid discussing?

Mentors may become involved in conversations with students on almost any topic. The mentor relationship becomes a friendship to the student, so they may feel free to talk to you about a variety of topics. Some of these may be of a personal nature. If the student initiates such a topic and you are uncomfortable discussing it, refer the student to their school counselor or parent. Mentors should not initiate personal discussions but respond appropriately to those initiated by the student.

May I give my home telephone number to the student?

There is to be no formal or planned contact between mentor and student off campus, with all contact taking place during the regular school day. However, some mentors and students write to each other over the summer. This is a great way to stay in touch during the two months they are away from one another.

What do I do if my student reveals that he or she is involved in some type of illegal activity such as drug use or gang-related activities?

Listen to the student and report the information to your school administrator.

What should I do if my student confides that he or she is being abused?

Listen to the student and make no judgment about abuse itself or the individual committing the abuse, if identified. Information of this nature must be reported, so please let your campus HOSTS liaison know what your student has told you.