

KOM Mentorship Program Policy and Procedures

Some of the policies don't apply to mentors enrolled in Professor Smith's Bethel course. Those will be marked with an asterisk ()

Recruitment Policy*

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program that mentors will be recruited from a variety of places. KOM will recruit mentors from local colleges and universities, KOM's newsletter and social media followers, and online search engines such as VolunteerMatch and Idealist. The Volunteer Coordinator will be in charge of all steps to the recruitment process, including the creation of marketing materials and attendance at community volunteer fairs. The Volunteer Coordinator will provide accurate information about KOM's Youth Mentorship Program during all recruitment.

Inquiry Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship program that all individuals who show interest in the program will be contacted and provided with further information than what was given to them at the initial point of contact. The Volunteer Coordinator will provide each individual with a position description and an application to apply to be a youth mentor in the program.

Eligibility Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program that each participant must meet the defined eligibility criteria. Mentoring staff should be knowledgeable of and understand all eligibility criteria required for mentor and mentee participation in the program.

Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the program coordinator and acceptance may then be allowed with the written approval of the executive director and representative of the board of directors when all eligibility requirements are not clearly met. These instances are expected to be rare.

Mentor Eligibility Requirements:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Reside in the Twin Cities metropolitan area
- Be willing to adhere to all KOM Mentorship Program policies and procedures
- Agree to a minimum of a **4 month commitment** to the program (during the school year)
- Commit to **seeing their mentee 2x/month and weekly contact by phone/email/social media**
- Complete the screening procedure
- Agree to attend mentor trainings as required
- Be willing to **communicate regularly with the program coordinator and submit monthly meeting and activity information**
- Have access to an automobile or reliable transportation
- If driving a mentee, have a current driver's license, auto insurance, and good driving record
- Have a clean criminal history
- Have never been accused, arrested, charged, or convicted of child abuse or molestation
- Not be a convicted felon
- Not be a user of illicit drugs
- Not use alcohol or controlled substances in an excessive or inappropriate manner
- Not be currently in treatment for substance abuse. If a substance abuse problem has occurred in the past the applicant must have completed a non-addictive period of at least five years
- Not currently be under treatment for a mental disorder or have been hospitalized for a mental disorder in the past three years (discuss further with Volunteer Coordinator; some exceptions allowed)
- Not have falsified information during the course of the screening process

Mentee Eligibility Requirements:

- Be 12-21 years old
- Must be enrolled in KOM's Youth Program
- Reside in the Twin Cities area

- Demonstrate a desire to participate in the program and be willing to abide by all KOM Mentorship Program policies and procedures
- Be able to obtain parental/guardian permission and ongoing support for participation in the program
- Agree to at least a 4 month commitment to the program (during the school year)
- Commit to seeing their mentor 2x/month and weekly contact by phone/email/social media
- Complete screening procedure
- Agree to attend mentee trainings as required
- Be willing to communicate regularly with the program coordinator and discuss monthly meeting and activity information

Screening Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program that each mentor and mentee applicant completes a screening procedure. All staff members must be trained and required to carefully follow the screening procedures.

At minimum, the following screening procedures are required for mentor and mentee applicants. Program staff must ensure that each applicant completes these established minimum screening procedures:

Mentor Screening Procedures

- Complete application and background check form
- Check driving record and gain copy of current insurance coverage
- Check criminal history: state criminal history, child abuse registry, sexual offender registry. Same checks must be performed in all states resided in as an adult.
- Provide three personal references*
- Complete personal interview*
- Based on information gained from screening process, determine mentor eligibility and appropriateness for program
- Send acceptance/rejection letter based on assessment*
- Create mentor file for all mentor applicants to include application, screening documentation and assessment summary (including for rejected applicants)
- If applicant is accepted, must complete pre-match mentor training prior to being matched with mentee

Mentee Screening Procedures

- Complete application
- Attend the mentee/parent orientation*
- Obtain parent/guardian consent
- Based on information gained from screening process, determine mentee eligibility and appropriateness for program
- Send acceptance/referral letter based on assessment*
- Create mentee file for all mentee applicants to include application, screening documentation and assessment summary (including for rejected applicants)

The decision to accept an applicant into the program will be based upon a final assessment done by program staff at the completion of the mentor or mentee screening procedure. The Volunteer Coordinator has final approval for an applicant's acceptance into the program. No reason will be provided to mentor applicants rejected from participation in the program. The Volunteer Coordinator will try to locate suitable referral for youth that are not accepted.

All mentors are expected to meet the eligibility criteria. However, extenuating circumstances may be reviewed at the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator and acceptance may then be allowed with written approval of the executive director and representative of the board of directors when all eligibility requirements are not clearly met. These instances are expected to be rare.

Training Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program that all mentors attend an initial training session prior to being matched. All mentees and parent(s) must attend a program orientation. The agendas must cover basic program guidelines, safety issues (including mandatory reporting), and communication/relationship building skills.

Each mentor will attend an additional two-hour in-service training session at least twice per year. These in-service sessions will be offered to each group at least quarterly. *

It is the responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator to plan, develop, and deliver all training sessions with assistance from other agency staff, board members, and volunteers. Evaluation forms will be collected from each training session for the purposes of evaluating/improving the content of the trainings and trainer performance.

Matching Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program that the program coordinator will follow the guidelines outlined in the match procedure prior to creating a mentor/mentee match. The program coordinator should use the factors outlined in the matching procedure to determine the suitability of a mentor/mentee match.

Matches must be either male adult to male youth or female adult to female youth. Upon special circumstances, there also may be the opportunity for a group mentorship. If the mentees in the group mentorship are all female, then all the mentors must be female. If the mentees in the group mentorship are all male, then all the mentors must be male. However, if there are male and female youth in the group, then there may be male and female mentors in the group.

Matching Procedures

To begin the match process, the program coordinator reviews the application, interview notes*, and interest survey information of both the mentee and mentor to determine match suitability between a mentor and mentee. The greatest weight will be placed on the mentee preferences and needs. A match selection will be made using the match suitability criteria as a guide:

- Preferences of the mentor, mentee, and/or parent/guardian
- Similar gender/ethnicity
- Common interests
- Compatibility of meeting times
- Geographical proximity
- Similar personalities

Once a potential match is identified, and prior to contacting any of the prospective participants, the program coordinator must review the files of the potential mentor and mentee to ensure all screening procedures have been completed and both have met all the eligibility criteria.

The program coordinator then first contacts the prospective mentor and without using last names, describes and provides information about the mentee to determine if there is interest by the mentor.*

Given initial interest by the mentor, the program coordinator then provides the mentee's parent/guardian with a description and information about the prospective mentor.*

If both the mentor and the parent/guardian agree, the coordinator will then contact the mentee and describe the prospective mentor to them. The mentee is informed last so as to minimize disappointment if either the mentor and/or parent/guardian does not approve of the suggested match in some way.*

Once both parties tentatively agree to the match, a time is scheduled for an introductory meeting. The program coordinator facilitates this introductory meeting of the mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian. The program coordinator should conduct the meeting by:

- Facilitating introductions

- Having the mentor take the lead in talking about his/her interests, hobbies, and why he/she wants to be a mentor, followed by the mentee doing the same

If all agree to move forward with the match, match contracts must be completed and signed by all parties. Copies of all are given to each party.*

The first mentor and mentee match meeting date and time should be confirmed.

Once the match is made, program staff will add the mentor/mentee name to the log sheet of the mentee/mentor files and schedule the first follow-up call to each person within the first week following their first meeting date.

Match Support and Supervision Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program that mentoring staff will make monthly phone or personal contact with all parties to each match including the mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian. Staff must gather information for that month including the dates and times spent participating in mentoring activities and a description of those activities, and assess the success of the match from all party's perspectives. In the case of match difficulties, discord, or concerns, appropriate discussion and intervention must be undertaken to improve or rectify problem areas.

Mentoring program staff must follow the steps outlined in the Match Support and Supervision Procedure. Beyond monitoring the match relationship and activities, program staff must undertake other efforts that support participants, such as regular group activities for matches, ongoing training events, a formal support structure for mentors, and the attainment of admission to community events/activities for match participants.

Match Support/Supervision Procedures

Supervision

1. Once matched, the Volunteer Coordinator will support and monitor all parties to a given match including the mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian.
2. Within one week of the first activity date of a new match, the Volunteer Coordinator will make phone/personal contact with all parties to determine how the first meeting went.
3. After this initial contact, the Volunteer Coordinator will then follow up monthly by phone with each party to gather information regarding meeting dates, times, activities, and how the match is proceeding. Three attempts to contact each party will be made in a given month before a written letter or note will be mailed requesting they call the Volunteer Coordinator.
4. Information regarding the dates, times, activities, and progress of the match will be recorded on the respective document.
5. In order to assess how the match is proceeding, program staff may inquire about the following and/or probe beyond to uncover core issues:
 - Are they enjoying participating in the match?
 - How do they feel it is going?
 - Are they having any difficulties?
 - Is the relationship developing as they would like?
 - If not, why do they think it isn't?
 - Are there any concerns or issues that should be addressed by program staff?
 - Do they need more support or any intervention?
6. In accordance with the training policy and procedures, the assigned program staff member should remind the mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian of the semi-annual inservice training requirement (for mentors and mentees) every few months and attempt to schedule these.*

Problem Resolution

1. If the Volunteer Coordinator assesses that there is a potential problem with the match, the mentorship staff will attempt to clarify the potential problem and work with the mentor, mentee, and/or parent/guardian to resolve the issue early.
2. The general process for resolving problems will follow the IDEAL model that includes:
 - Identify the problem and have a clear shared understanding of the problem between the mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian.
 - Develop alternative solutions that could address the problem.
 - Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each solution.
 - Act on the most constructive solution
 - Learn from how the solution worked and repeat the IDEAL process if necessary.
3. When the match problem involves a lack of contact on the part of the mentor or mentee, the mentorship staff must investigate the reasons for lack of contact with the offending party, and make efforts to ensure the match is meeting according to the contracted amount of time per month.
4. If a problem area continues, the mentorship staff should consult with other staff members and/or community resources to define a viable approach to addressing the problem and proposing potential solutions.
5. If the problem cannot be resolved, formally closing the match may be necessary. At that time, it would be determined if either or both parties are suitable for matching with other partners.
6. All support and supervision by program staff must be recorded and saved on file.

Other Support

It is the responsibility of the program coordinator to provide other support to the matches, including but not inclusive of the following:

- Plan and implement at least one group activity for mentor/mentee matches per quarter.
- Facilitate an ongoing support group for mentors that will meet bimonthly*
- Access community resources to obtain and disseminate tickets to community events and activities for matches.

Recognition Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program that all participants—including mentors, mentees, and parents/guardians—be recognized as important to the success of the mentoring program. Particular emphasis will be placed upon recognizing the program's volunteer mentors.

It is the responsibility of the program coordinator to, at minimum, plan and implement the following recognition activities:

- Host an annual recognition event with outstanding service or performance acknowledgments
- Feature a mentor, mentee, parent/guardian, or general match success story in the newsletter
- Utilize outstanding mentors to help deliver orientation and training sessions for the recruitment and matching of new mentors.

Record-Keeping Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program that each step of the mentoring application and match process be documented by creating a case file for each potential mentor and mentee.

All records are to be kept confidential and are to be covered by the conditions outlined in the confidentiality policy. Archival records or those records of past applicants and participants will be maintained and kept confidential for a period of seven years after the close of their participation in the program. After seven years, the records will be shredded and discarded with approval from the executive director and destroyed only by approved individuals.

The program coordinator must keep stringent records of all program activities, utilizing approved forms. All files should be regularly maintained and updated within an electronic database and/or hard copy filing system.

Confidentiality Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program to protect the confidentiality of its participants and their families. With the exception of the limitations listed below, program staff will only share information about mentors, mentees, and their families with other KOM staff members. Further, all prospective mentors, mentees, and parents/guardians should be informed of the scope and limitations of confidentiality by program staff. Additionally, mentors are required to keep information about their mentee and his/her family confidential.

In order for KOM to provide a responsible and professional service to participants, it is necessary to ask mentors, mentees, parents/guardians, and other outside sources to divulge extensive personal information about the prospective participants and their families, including:

- Information gained from mentors and mentees, written or otherwise, about themselves and/or their families, in application to and during program participation
- Participants' names and images gained from participants themselves, program meetings, training sessions, and other events
- Information gained about participants from outside sources including confidential references, school staff, employers

Records are, therefore, considered the property of the agency, not the agency workers, and are not available for review by mentors, mentees, or parents/guardians.

Limits of Confidentiality

Information from mentor and mentee records may be shared with individuals or organizations as specified below under the following conditions:

- Information may be gathered about program participants and shared with other participants, individuals, or organizations only upon receipt of signed "release" forms from mentors, mentees, or parents/guardians.
- Identifying information (including names, photographs, videos, etc.) of program participants may be used in agency publications or promotional materials only upon written consent of the mentor, mentee, and/or parent/guardian.
- Information may only be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts pursuant to a valid and enforceable subpoena.
- Information may be provided to legal counsel in the event of litigation or potential litigation involving the agency. Such information is considered privileged information, and its confidentiality is protected by law.
- Program staff and volunteers are mandatory reporters and as such must disclose information indicating that a mentor or mentee may be dangerous to or intends to harm him/herself or others.
- If program staff members receive information at any point in the match process that a volunteer is using illegal substances, there is a criminal history of any kind, or is inappropriately using alcohol or other controlled substances, the information will be shared with the parent and they will have the option to reject the prospective mentor or close the existing match.

Requesting Confidential Information From Other Agencies

A mentee's or volunteer's right to privacy shall be respected by the agency. Requests for confidential information from other organizations or persons shall be accompanied by a signed release from the mentor, mentee, and/or parent/guardian.

Violations of Confidentiality

A known violation of the agency policy on confidentiality by a program participant may result in a written warning or disciplinary action such as suspension or termination from the program.

Safekeeping of Confidential Records

The co-executive director is considered the custodian of confidential records. It is his/her responsibility to supervise the management of confidential information in order to ensure safekeeping, accuracy, accountability, and compliance with Board policies.

Overnight Visits and Out-of-Town Travel Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program to encourage mentor/mentee visits within their own community. KOM does not permit overnight visits.

Weapons/Firearms/Dangerous Materials Policy

The possession or use of firearms, firecrackers, explosives, toxic or dangerous chemicals, or other lethal weapons, equipment, or material while participating in mentoring activities is strictly prohibited.

Any violation of this policy will result in the immediate suspension and/or termination of the mentoring relationship. In addition, violations of this policy may result in notification being given to legal authorities that may result in arrest or legal action, and may be punishable by fine and/or imprisonment

Social Media Policy

When texting is the most reliable form of communication between a mentor and mentee, the Volunteer Coordinator and/or Youth Coordinator must be included in the texts (creating a group text). GroupMe or a standard group chat may be used.

In the same way, if it is necessary to message through Facebook, the conversation must be initiated by KOM Youth Staff and the volunteer will be added to the group message without being "Facebook friends" with any of the participants. This avoids non-supervised private online messaging. If Facebook Messenger is used, volunteers should examine their own page and change the privacy settings on any content they deem inappropriate for the youth or that they want to keep private. It is the adult volunteer's responsibility to block youth access to inappropriate content on their page.

The mentor must also clarify to their mentee that they are responsible for reporting any content made visible to them on their mentee's page that leads the mentor to believe they are being harmed, may harm someone else, or may harm themselves. Mentors and mentees must not communicate via Snap Chat, Instagram, or other social media sites/apps other than Facebook.

Communication via texting is encouraged to be about setting a schedule or preparing for a youth mentorship related activity. Avoid texting emotional or social conversations, but save that for face-to-face interaction. It is the volunteer's responsibility to maintain healthy boundaries with online or texting communication.

Adult volunteers must set an example for youth in every interaction they have in person and online. Keep all communication mentor-appropriate. If communication or boundaries start to feel cloudy, mentors should print off any discussion so that they have a record and then check in immediately with the Volunteer Coordinator to assist with accountability and setting up new boundaries.

Closure Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program that all mentors and mentees must participate in closure procedures when their match ends. Closure is defined as the ending of a formal match relationship regardless of the circumstances of the match ending or whether they intend to have future contact informally beyond the match duration.

Closure can occur for any number of reasons including: the contracted match duration has ended, one or both participants do not want to continue the match, there are changes in life circumstances of either the mentor or mentee, or an individual no longer meets the requirements for program participation. Hence, the match may end at the discretion of the mentor, mentee, parent/guardian, and/or Volunteer Coordinator. It is left to the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator whether an individual will be reassigned to another match in the future based upon past participation performance and current goals and needs of the program.

Future contact will be at the mutual and informal agreement of the mentor, the mentee, and the parent/guardian. If future contact is agreed upon, the KOM Mentorship Program will not be responsible for monitoring and supporting the match after the match has ended. The coordinator will verbally and in writing inform all parties—the mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian—that the formal match has ended and that KOM will not be liable for any incidents that occur after the match has closed.

Closure Procedures

KOM Mentorship Program staff will follow the closure procedures as closely as possible and will vary based on the reasons for the match ending:

1. At the point it is decided that a match is closing, the mentoring program staff will supervise and instruct all participants through the closure process.
2. All closures must be classified as to the reason for the match ending. The major classifications are as follows and the circumstances will dictate the procedure to be followed:

Planned

A planned closure is one that has been known about for a period of time such as three months or more. Common reasons for planning a match closure may include the match is reaching the end of the one school year commitment, the youth ages out of the program, and/or the goals of the match have been achieved.

Extenuating

Extenuating circumstances for match closure are usually more sudden in nature, and beyond the control of the program and/or its participants, i.e., relocation or moving away, or an unexpected personal crisis.

Difficult

A difficult match closure is due to relationship or behavioral difficulties, i.e., lack of cooperation or contact, parental disapproval, irreconcilable issues, lack of compatibility, and/or violations of program policies.

3. In all cases, attempts will be made to have a closure meeting to include the Volunteer Coordinator and/or program staff, the mentor, and mentee. The parent/guardian may attend if he/she desires. The meeting agenda should cover the following, depending on the circumstances of closure:
 - Open discussion about the relationship ending
 - Complete the closure Exit Surveys
 - Discuss KOM's policies around future contact (see Closure Policy)
 - Distribute participant Closure Letters

Evaluation Policy

It is the policy of the KOM Mentorship Program that evaluation will be a key component in measuring the success of its mentoring program and for making continuous improvements in the effectiveness and delivery of mentoring services.

Evaluation data will be collected at the end of the program year from program participants, including the following general measures: match satisfaction, overall program satisfaction, and suggested program improvements.

Program staff will be responsible for evaluation efforts.

Mentors are required to complete an online mentorship survey following the end of our program timeline, which will be sent out via email.

Mentoring Program Policies and Procedures Adapted from "Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual," The Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence & The National Mentoring Center at Northwest Regional Educational Library. 2007.

Social media policy guidelines were adapted from "Social Networking Policy Considerations for Youth Serving Organizations," Gundersen National Child Protection Training Center, Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center, Inc. 2015.