

Online Communication Policy for Volunteers Tutoring Youth

This policy was created to support KOM's volunteers and youth program participants during the COVID-19 pandemic as youth tutoring has transitioned to an online format.

KOM Volunteer Youth Tutors will work with KOM Youth Staff to set up the best means of communication between volunteers and youth program participants.

KOM Youth Staff must be included on all messages between the youth and the volunteer to avoid non-supervised private online messaging:

- For email, the KOM Youth Staff must be copied onto the email chain.
- If online messaging through Facebook Messenger is used (as many of the youth participants have easier access to Facebook Messenger), 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. 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.
- When texting is needed for communication between a volunteer tutor and a youth program participant, the Youth Staff must be included in the texts (creating a group text).
- Volunteers and youth must not communicate via Snap Chat, Instagram, or other social media sites/apps other than through supervised Facebook conversations.
- All video chats must be supervised by a KOM Youth Staff in a group setting. There should be no private video chats between volunteers and youth program participants.
- If a youth private messages a volunteer, or emails a volunteer without including the Youth Staff, the volunteer must immediately include the Youth Staff in the conversation.

It is the volunteer’s responsibility to maintain healthy boundaries with all online communication. This includes:

- Using appropriate language through written text and verbally through audio or video calls.
- Dressing appropriately when on a video call with KOM Youth Staff and youth.
- Keeping the conversation appropriate and related to tutoring.

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