

# Setting Boundaries

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As the relationship progresses, there will be times when students ask questions or make requests that might make you feel uncomfortable. The best way to handle this is to set boundaries and expectations. First of all, realize that it is alright to say no to your student. If you have questions about boundaries, check with LSS.

Early in the relationship, talk about things that can and cannot be done or said. Keep in mind that most children need clear boundaries and renewed expectations throughout the relationship. The boundaries of the mentor relationship will be different for everyone. For the relationship to be successful, mentors must be willing to share some parts of their lives with students. Talking about childhood, family, or work are wonderful ways to build trust, but be sure to watch your students reaction when talking about yourself. Make a decision to set boundaries if there are personal aspects of life that you are uncomfortable sharing.

Mentors should also be aware of physical boundaries. Never initiate or request physical contact with your student. Oftentimes students are so excited and run down the hall and latch on to their mentors. While this contact can be unavoidable, please remind your student that is not appropriate at school.

When it comes to setting boundaries, clear communication is essential. Set boundaries on giving your phone number, work information and especially on social media.

While using Facebook is a great way for you to talk about your own personal mentoring experience, keep in mind that it is NEVER allowed to post a photo of your mentee or give any other personal information about your mentee on your social media sites. From time to time, LSS will post stories about matches. This is only done when a permission form is signed by a parent and they have specifically allowed the interview/photo to take place.

## **Tips on Setting Boundaries**

During your first sessions, discuss the nature of the mentor relationship. Students should be familiar with the program policies, but this discussion will allow you to reinforce them. Explain that according to the rules of the program, you may only meet with them at school.

Ask your student what his/her expectations and goals are for the relationship. Why do they want to have a mentor? Share your own expectations. These discussions can help you both identify goals for the relationship.

If a student asks you to break the policies of the program, remind them of your initial conversation and redirect the request. For example, if she asks you to take her to a baseball game, simply remind her that the rules do not allow this activity. Refer to your initial conversation and suggest another activity that is permissible. You may research baseball in the school library or on the computer.