



*Guide to Mentoring
for Parents and Guardians*



Congratulations!

You have made an important decision to open new doors for your child that will help him or her grow into a confident and successful young person. The Athletes For Kids Youth Mentoring Program will match your child with a caring, dedicated mentor who can offer your child new experiences, guidance, support, and most importantly, friendship.

This Parent Guide will help you learn about the world of mentoring, how our program works, and the important role that you play in making the experience a successful one for your child. Remember, our staff is just a phone call away. We're happy to answer questions or address concerns whenever you need help or seek guidance.

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What Is Mentoring All About?

What Is a Mentor?

A mentor is a caring and responsible community member who takes time to be a friend to a young person. A mentor listens, supports, and guides a young person on a consistent basis over a specified period of time, usually at least one year. Our mentor program is unique because every one of our mentors is a high school athlete. They volunteer time to our program while maintaining rigorous scholastic and sports schedules and are often stars in the local community.

A mentor develops a friendship with a young person—whom we call a “buddy”—in order to help him or her be successful at home, at school, and in the community. By developing this positive relationship, a mentor can:

- Help a young person develop a sense of competence
- Help a young person with social skills
- Nurture a young person’s self-confidence and positive self-esteem
- Introduce the young person to new ideas, activities, and opportunities within the parameters set by you, the parent/guardian

The particular ways that your own child may benefit from the mentoring relationship will depend on his or her needs, strengths, and many other factors. Sometimes the benefits of mentoring aren’t visible right away, but over time this friendship can help your child gain new skills and experiences that will last a lifetime.

Mentors are not meant to take the role of parent/guardian, teacher, or coach. A mentor is not a disciplinarian or decision-maker for a child. A mentor’s main role

***A mentor
is a . . .***

Friend

Companion

Supporter

Role model

**Resource for
new ideas and
opportunities**

**Someone your
child can talk to**

***A mentor
is not a . . .***

Social worker

Parent

Teacher

Counselor

Nag

Parole officer

Babysitter

Source of money

Disciplinarian

is to spend time doing positive and fun activities that help your child become more self-confident. By doing this, the mentor becomes part of a caring team who supports the healthy development of your child.

Why Does My Child Need A Mentor?

All children need the support of caring community members in order to be successful, not only within their family but at school and in their communities. Growing up isn't easy, but for those with special needs or those with less than ideal family histories, it can be especially difficult. Sometimes parents don't have all the answers, and sometimes children need someone outside the family with whom to share their thoughts. Having a variety of people positively involved in a child's life provides a child with new opportunities and experiences that will help him/her grow and gain self confidence.

You may be able to think of adults — a teacher, a coach, a pastor — who helped you out when you were a child, encouraging you through rough spots along your road to adulthood, or just showing you a new way to look at your world. Although this may not have been a formal mentoring relationship, this person was a mentor for you.

A mentor can give your child someone else to talk to — a safe, concerned, and responsible friend who can help sort out a problem or just listen and be supportive. A mentor can be someone just to have a little fun with, when the world feels overwhelming.

What is an AFK Mentor?

Athletes For Kids Youth Mentoring Program has male and female mentors from 15 – 18 years old who are local high school athletes in their junior or senior year of high school. We currently have chapters at high schools from south of Issaquah to north Redmond.

Interested athletes are subject to a rigorous selection process. Candidates chosen for the program show empathy, love kids, and have a maturity level suitable for role model status. Trained at an orientation workshop and supported in monthly mentor meetings at their high school, they are ready to dedicate the time and energy needed to begin their new friendship.



"In a small community, high school athletes have local star power. The kids whom they mentor suffer from physical or developmental disabilities or histories that put them at-risk. They often have few or no friends. They have difficulty forming relationships and as a result have little self confidence. They feel like outsiders. With their student-athlete mentor at their side, the mentored kids feel accepted and included again. Their peers look at them differently because they suddenly have a special relationship with a sort of celebrity. The mentored kids gain a friend, a role model, stronger sense of self and more confidence. The mentors grow as well. The student athletes learn what it means to give back to their community, to commit their time to someone else, to overcome barriers in building a relationship with someone less fortunate than themselves and to look at the world a little differently."

***– Ken Moscarel, founder,
Athletes For Kids Youth Mentoring Program***



About the Athletes For Kids Youth Mentoring Program

Who we are

We began in 2002 when our founder formed a friendship between his child with Tourette's syndrome and a star athlete at Skyline High School. As the two began spending more and more time together, the child's parents noticed an amazing transformation in their son and knew they had something to share with the special needs community. Ken and Liz Moscaret and Simi Reynolds recruited and trained AFK's first group of mentors the next year at Skyline High School in Sammamish and the program has since expanded into five other schools with plans for future growth. As far as we know, we are the only mentorship program matching up these two particular groups in such a close personal relationship.

Our Services

Athletes For Kids matches high school-athlete volunteer mentors with children ages 6 to 16 who have a diagnosed disability or are referred by a counselor, teacher, or occupational therapist. It is expected that the child be able to communicate with the mentor. The program is made available for a nominal membership fee and is provided to any child meeting the above criteria within a reasonable driving distance of the participating high schools and/or an available mentor.

How are matches made?

We get to know our mentors through their application, interview, orientation and training. Likewise, we find out about your family during our family intake process. Our matches are always gender-specific, one athlete to one youth. After that we consider many different criteria to find the right mentor for your child. Personalities, geographic proximity, common interests, and common values are always weighed. Sometimes our families will have specific criteria, i.e. cultural similarities, or other special needs we'll take into account.

Usually we offer the family the opportunity to choose between two or three suitable athlete-mentor candidates. The next steps of the process can take a few days to a few months and are designed to offer the family time to make sure we have found the right match.

See our Steps to Matching document in the appendix for a detailed guide.

Where and when does mentoring take place?

Once matched, mentors strive to spend six to eight hours a month with their buddy, usually at the child's home. We encourage families to set up a regular meeting time with the mentor. One-and-a-half hours per week usually works well. We encourage mentors to clearly communicate any scheduling changes. If the athlete does not contact your child or you for more than two weeks (without prior notice), please contact our Mentorship Support Coordinator immediately.

During the athlete's sports season we ask for patience. Remember, mentors are volunteers, juggling academics, sports, families, friends *and* their commitment to your child.

All matches are set up to last until the mentor graduates from high school. Matches are expected to meet during the summer months as often as possible.

What do matches do when they meet?

Mentors and their buddies begin by just getting to know one another, learning about each other's interests, likes, and dislikes, and talking about when they will meet and what they want to do when they get together. We encourage these first few meetings to take place at your home, where your child feels comfortable. Later they may plan special activities outside of the home, with your permission. The focus of their time together is one of friendship. Just having a friend to talk can help your child gain confidence and develop new interests.

Since our focus is a one-to-one relationship, your child's athletic abilities will not affect his/her match.

We encourage mentors to find low-cost or free activities, such as hiking or cycling, going to a park, or visiting the public library. Occasionally your family may pay for a special outing such as a trip to the zoo or appropriate movie etc. After the two have developed a bond, the mentor may plan activities with other mentors and their buddies, if appropriate for your child's age, temperament and/or disability. You might invite the mentor to your child's activities or take your child to watch the mentor's activities.

Regardless of the specific activities, Athletes For Kids mentors are encouraged to take a relationship-centered approach to working with your child. Research indicates that the magic of mentoring comes from the closeness of this bond, not simply from doing certain activities. Accordingly, Athletes For Kids mentors are trained to put their emphasis on being a supportive and encouraging *friend* to your child.

Some parents worry that a mentor might subvert the parents' role and have concerns about their child saying things to the mentor that are not expressed at home. Our mentors are trained to work closely *with* parents so that everyone is comfortable with the mentoring activities.

While they may keep some aspects of their relationship with the child in confidence, they are required to report any conversations about dangerous or illegal activity to both parents and the program staff. They are also required to report any concerns about abuse or neglect to the program staff.

So while your child may be getting a new friend in her mentor, you, as the parent, are also getting another caring team member who will work with you to help your child thrive.



How Do I Know the Program is Safe?

We know that you're putting your trust in our program and in the mentor we assign to your child. We have developed a thorough process to find qualified, safe, and dedicated volunteers who truly want to make a difference in the lives of young people.

Every interested athlete completes an extensive application and is interviewed by experienced staff members. Selected candidates later go through a screening process that includes a criminal history background check, a reference check, and a review of their driving records.

Finally, athletes attend a program orientation which includes a section on child safety. This gives us another chance to see them in a group setting and to get to know them better prior to their mentorship assignment.

Safety doesn't stop when the mentor is matched with a child. In fact, our work is really just beginning. We check in with all mentors at monthly meetings, and

with the buddy's parents/guardians as long as the match is active. You can expect to hear from our staff at least once a quarter — more often in the first few months. The check-in helps us see how things are going and if there is anything we can do to help the relationship develop. We also encourage you to call your Mentorship Support Coordinator any time you have a concern or question (phone numbers are in the staff directory at the end of this guide).

Safety Begins With You. . .

Our mentoring program prides itself on its record of having no incidents of child abuse or other unsafe incidents. Mentors are a wonderful addition to the lives of the children we serve. With your help we can be sure that all children in our mentoring program receive the benefits of a caring and responsible mentor.

- ***Maintain an open door policy in your home.*** Do not leave your child home alone with a mentor. (Mentors cannot offer bathroom/dressing help.)
- ***Monitor all activities.*** Get involved in activity selections between the mentor and your child.
- ***Follow our guidelines.*** Don't approve activities that violate our safety policies. (for example, an unscheduled weekend trip or an invitation for an overnight visit to the mentor's home).
- ***Talk to your child about safety.*** Teach your child how to stay safe and remind him to follow your own safety rules when he is away from home.
- ***Communicate with your child.*** Keep the lines of communication between you and your child open so that he feels comfortable letting you know if there's a problem.

How Do Matches End?

Matches officially end the summer the mentor graduates from high school. Athletes For Kids offers closure training to our graduating mentors in late spring.

They are encouraged to discuss their next step with your child, reflect on the positives of the relationship and celebrate with a special final meeting. Matches can sometimes end prematurely for a variety of reasons: a family might move away, life circumstances might change, even the reality that sometimes a match just doesn't "click". This rarely happens but when it does our staff will work with both parties to facilitate a closing meeting.

What is the yearly program timeline?

Our program answers inquiries and adds children to our wait list year round. Our athletes are typically recruited in the fall, trained in late winter or early spring and matched with those families on our wait list within a few months of training. Your child will be added to our wait list according to date of inquiry. Since several criteria influence a match, your date of inquiry will not always determine your child's match date.

Our Staff

Athletes For Kids Youth Mentoring Program is staffed by an Executive Director, an Assistant Executive Director, a Mentor Match Coordinator, and a Mentorship Support Coordinator. These professionals are available to support mentors and their buddies, to answer your questions, to help families find services they may need, to offer advice, and to make sure the program runs safely, smoothly, and effectively.

A complete staff directory is provided at the end of this guide.

Our Community Partners

As a nonprofit program, we work hard to use our resources wisely. In fact, our cost per match is much lower than most mentoring organizations. We are grateful to our supporters for their generous contributions, both monetary and in-kind, that allow us to achieve our goals.

We receive funding from the Cities of Issaquah and Sammamish, the Joshua P. Williams Foundation, the Sammamish Rotary, and from many individual donors.

We work closely with school professionals and parent groups in our service area and their support and involvement is invaluable to our success.

The support staff at The Children's Response Center serves as a resource to AFK by providing comprehensive advocacy, education and prevention services and guidance.

Lynne Banki of Lighthouse Books serves as a resource on autism awareness and provides mentor training through her presentation on "Autism as a Difference."

Many of our meetings take place in school, city buildings, and local libraries. Our program benefits greatly from being able to access these public resources.

You may have seen our athletes serving in a non-mentor capacity at area events hosted for the special-needs community. We participate in Autism Day in Fall City; the Derby Races for both Issaquah and Sammamish Rotary; Special Olympics; Challenger Baseball; and others. Lending a helping hand is as beneficial for us as for the organization we're serving, because once parents see our teens in action, they're likely to contact us about a mentorship for their son or daughter.

Parents like you have always been a great resource for us. You may have community resources available to you that you would be willing to pass on. We would love to hear from you to discuss any partnering ideas you may have:



- **Do you work for an organization that gives community grants to nonprofits?**
- **Does your employer have a corporate gift matching program?**
- **Are you a member of an organization that offers in-kind donations to nonprofits?**
- **Are you a member of a professional service organization that would like to hear our story for potential sponsorship?**
- **Do you or your employer have special skills or talents you could offer Athletes For Kids?**
- **Do you network with others in the special needs community? Would you be willing to refer us to another family who may benefit from our program?**

What Is My Role in the Mentoring Relationship?

The friendship that is developed between a mentor and your child is a special relationship just for them, but you have an important role in helping that relationship be successful.

Think about how you are involved in other activities your child participates in — such as sports or an after-school activity. You listen to your child when she tells you how the activity is going, make sure she has transportation to the activity, and tell the adults in charge when things don't seem to be going well. You probably won't be out on the field playing the game with your child, but you will likely be cheering on the sidelines.

Your role in the mentoring program is very similar. The following are some specific ways that you can help make your child's mentoring experience more successful:

With My Child:

- Help your child attend all meetings with the mentor, and contact the mentor as soon as possible if you cannot meet.
- Don't withhold meetings with the mentor as punishment.
- Be positive about the relationship, and let your child see you are happy that she has a mentor in her life.
- Remind your child to thank his mentor and show appreciation for the time they spend together.
- Ask open-ended questions about how things are going. For example, "What was the best thing you did with your mentor today?" can yield more results than "Did you have a good time with your mentor today?"
- Listen to your child and be supportive of her feelings. She may be shy or nervous with her mentor at first and may go through periods of "testing" the mentor as the relationship develops. Be patient and encouraging.
- Tell your child when you notice positive changes as a result of having a mentor. Your praise means a lot!

With the mentor:

- Remember that the mentor is there for your child not for you or other children in your family. Don't ask the mentor to take other siblings along on outings or to become your family tutor or counselor. Other children in the home or at the playground may sometimes interact with your child and her mentor, but the focus should center on the interaction between the two.
- Let the mentor know about any important rules, food limitations, or scheduling issues. If possible, give the mentor your child's activity calendar.
- Let the mentor know when you have a change of address, phone, or other contact information, or if there is a significant change in your lives that may affect the relationship, such as moving away from the area or a loss in your family.
- Show the mentor your appreciation!
Write a thank-you note now and then, share photos, and point out improvements you've noticed in your child's life.
- If you have a concern you want to share with the mentor, do it when your child is not present to avoid any embarrassment or discomfort.
- If you need to end a match early, please allow time for closure.

***We appreciate
your interest
and involvement,
and so will
your child!***

With program staff:

- Complete and turn in any needed paperwork in a timely manner.
- Tell us anything you think we should know about your child that may not be covered in the application or in the initial phone interview.
- Help the Mentorship Support Coordinator conduct regular check-ins by returning phone calls or emails quickly and taking some time to talk about how your child is relating to his or her mentor, what activities they participate in and if the communication with the mentor is adequate This is your chance to let staff know if you have a concern, or if things are going really well
- Let the Mentorship Support Coordinator know right away about any changes in your contact information or other changes that may affect the mentoring relationship, such as moving away from the area or a loss in your family.
- Contact the Mentorship Support Coordinator if you have concerns about reliability or communications with your mentor. We want to hear from you if you have an issue that lingers more than two weeks.

Common Concerns for Parents

Getting a mentoring relationship started can sometimes seem stressful: the mentor might worry about breaking the ice, the child might wonder what the experience will be like, and the parents might have concerns about this new person in their child's life.



Communication is the most common problem between parents and mentors.

As a result of our rapidly changing technology, teens are quickly developing new communication styles.

- **For most teens, texting is their communication of choice.**
- **Teens tend to return phone calls without listening to the voicemail message.**
- **Teens usually do not leave voice mail messages but still expect others to notice that they called and phone them back.**

We encourage our mentors to use different modes of communication, especially if they are having problems reaching you. You can help us as we work through this generational issue by adapting as much as you are able, and being clear about your expectations and your preferred communication method with them.

If communication becomes an ongoing problem for you, please contact our Mentorship Support Coordinator.

What if we have a rough start, or the mentor does not seem compatible?

- Ideally, questions you have about the mentor will be addressed during your introductory meeting. But sometimes unexpected issues crop up in new mentoring relationships as boundaries are set and personalities emerge. It is not uncommon for a mentoring relationship to have a slightly bumpy start.
- Children in new mentoring relationships often need time to warm up to the idea. After all, a mentor is a different kind of friend than they have had before, and children can initially be uncomfortable or shy around older people they do not know. We encourage you to give the relationship time to develop and to contact your Mentorship Support Coordinator if you have continuing concerns. Athletes For Kids offers a structured process for working through relationship difficulties. We offer on-going training for mentors on topics such as problem-solving and communication skills. Still, we find that relationship issues can and will happen. Most issues are easily resolved by having the Mentorship Support Coordinator advocate for you. As an example, if there has been an absence due to illness, summer conflicts, or sports schedules, the Coordinator can help to restart the mentorship.
- Please report any violations of program rules or inappropriate behavior by a mentor immediately. Safety is our first priority.
- If all attempts to solve problems in a match are not successful, and if you or your child does not want the match to continue, Athletes For Kids will attempt to match your child with another mentor, if one is available. This is a rare occurrence and one we try to avoid. Research indicates that closing a match too early can actually have negative consequences. These consequences affect both the buddy and the athlete. This is why we encourage all participants to be patient, honest, and do their best to work through any problems as their mentoring relationships develop.

"I'm very impressed with the program and our athlete-mentor. What a great philosophy and a positive experience for all."

Mother of boy, grade 3

What if the mentor wants to do an activity I disagree with? Or has values that I do not share?

- Disagreements about values and interests are common in any relationship. However, you should remember that two of the most valuable things a mentor provides are new experiences and different ideas. Mentors broaden horizons by introducing their buddies to worlds that would not have been available otherwise. Mentors open doors and provide perspective.
- As a parent, you monitor and approve all activities between your child and his/her mentor. You always have the right to disallow an activity. Our Mentorship Support Coordinator can work with you and your child's mentor to find activities that are acceptable.
- If you have concerns about finding a mentor to suit your unique set of values, please communicate your concerns to our Mentor Match Coordinator when your child initially enrolls in the program. This will allow our staff to communicate your boundaries up front and find an appropriate volunteer to meet your child's needs.

What about gifts and money? Should my child accept gifts from a mentor? Who pays for outings?

- As a rule, mentors are not encouraged to give gifts or spend money on activities. A mentor may purchase a small token gift to acknowledge a special occasion such as a birthday or achievement, but shopping trips and regular gifts of items or cash are not allowed.
- It is expected that the family of the buddy pay for admission fees, tickets or restaurant visits. We encourage our mentors to find low cost or no cost activities but realize an occasional special outing may go a long way in building a relationship. If your family's financial considerations would greatly limit these activities, please contact our Mentorship Support Coordinator as some funds may be available to mentors for this purpose.



Appendix

Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTORS, BUDDIES AND FAMILIES OF BUDDIES

Mentor Eligibility Requirements

- Be at least a sophomore in high school, participating on a high school sports team, and attending one of our chapter schools.
- Agree to commit to the program until high school graduation.
- Be willing to spend a minimum of six hours a month with the buddy (average 1.5 hours per week.)
- Be willing to communicate with the buddy weekly.
- Be willing to offer time to at least two special activities or AFK fundraising events per year.
- Complete the screening process: Submit WATCH form and agree to criminal background check, submit a new mentor application, agree to interview, and submit character references.
- Agree to attend initial orientation and training workshop before being considered for a match.
- Agree to attend brief, monthly training meetings at or near your school. These are required meetings.
- Be willing to communicate regularly with the Mentorship Support Coordinator and submit monthly meeting and activity information. Be willing to answer all requests for information in a timely manner (within 48 hours if possible.)
- Be willing to adhere to all AFK policies and procedures and have a parent or guardian signature on the Parental Consent Form for Mentors.

- Have transportation provided to buddy's home.
- If transporting buddy by car:
 - ◊ Have a current driver's license, auto insurance and a good driving record (no major citations). A copy of driver's license and auto insurance must be on file with AFK.
 - ◊ Have a transportation waiver signed by the family of the buddy on file with AFK.
 - ◊ When buddy is in car, follow all traffic laws including seat belt laws.
- Have a clean criminal history. Have never been accused, arrested, charged or convicted of child abuse or molestation. Not be a convicted felon.
- Carry buddy's emergency contacts card with you any time you are out of the buddy's home.
- Not use alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substances.
- Not have falsified information during the course of the screening process.

Eligibility Requirements for the Buddy and Buddy's Family

- Reside within a reasonable driving distance to one of our chapter schools or one of our mentors.
- Child is between 5 – 15 years old, has a referral from a school professional, a health care or other specialist, and/or has a diagnosed disability or IEP.
- Demonstrate a desire to participate in the program and be willing to abide by all AFK's policies and procedures.
- Understands that a nine month commitment benefits both the child and mentor. Anything less hurts the child.
- Commit to consistent meetings until the mentor graduates from high school.

- Be willing to communicate with the mentor weekly.
- Complete phone interview.
- Complete all pertinent forms in a timely manner: Criminal Background Check Form, Parental Consent Form, Emergency Contact Form.
- Pay the membership fee. There is a \$100 Membership Fee for each new match. The fee is paid by the family requesting a match, is nonrefundable, and helps to offset the initial cost of arranging the mentorship. In addition to the cost of making the match, AFK incurs approximately \$750 per mentorship each year to maintain the mentorship through ongoing support and follow-up from staff.
- Be willing to communicate regularly with the Mentorship Support Coordinator or Match Coordinator. Requests for information must be answered in a timely manner (within 48 hours if possible.)
- Be willing to communicate change of address, phone, email etc. in a timely manner.

Overnight Visits / Home Alone Restrictions

Overnight visits of any kind are prohibited. This includes family vacations and long visits.

Mentors cannot offer bathroom dressing help and are instructed to never be in a home alone with a child. Maintain open door policy.

Confidentiality & Mandatory Reporting Policy

It is the policy of AFK 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, buddies, and their families with other AFK professional staff and the Board of Directors.

All prospective mentors, buddies, and parents/guardians will be informed of the scope and limitations of confidentiality by program staff. Additionally, mentors are required and trained to keep information about their buddy and his/her family confidential.

Records are considered the property of AFK, not AFK employees, and are not available for review by mentors, buddies, or parents/guardians.

Limits of Confidentiality

Information from mentor and buddy 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, buddies, or parents/guardians.
- Identifying information (including names, photographs, videos, etc.) of AFK participants may be used in publications or promotional materials only upon written consent of the mentor, buddy, 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 organization. Such information is considered privileged information, and its confidentiality is protected by law.
- If program staff receives information at any point in the match process that an athlete is using illegal substances, has 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.
- At the time a mentor or buddy is considered as a match candidate, information is shared between the prospective match parties. Each party shall have the right to refuse the proposed match based on the information provided to them. The information to be shared may include:
 - ◇ *Mentors:* age, sex, race, religion, interests, hobbies, sport, living situation, siblings, reasons for applying to the program.
 - ◇ *Buddies:* age, sex, race, religion, interests, hobbies, family situation, siblings, living situation, a summary of the client intake information, and expectations for match participation.

Mandatory Abuse Reporting

It is the policy of AFK that all staff must report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect of program clients or program participants immediately. All such suspected reports must be made to appropriate state and/or local authorities. Program staff must follow the mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect procedure.

All employees, volunteers, and mentors of AFK are required to undergo training as to what constitutes child abuse and neglect, what the state statutes are, and how to properly report such cases.

The event of a report of child abuse or neglect filed against anyone in the program will be overseen by the Executive Director. Contact with program youth will be restricted or constrained and/or the person in question suspended from employment or program participation per the decision of the Executive Director and Board of Directors until such investigation is concluded.

Violations of Confidentiality

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

Transportation Policy

It is the policy of AFK to allow mentors to transport buddies in the mentor's private vehicle if all consent forms are signed and on file and the mentor agrees to follow all other items of the transportation policy listed below:

- AFK has a signed consent from the buddy's parent/guardians approving the transportation of their child in mentor's car.
- AFK has a signed consent from the mentor and the mentor's parent/guardians to transport a buddy in a mentor's car.
- Mentors transporting buddies must use reliable, insured transportation. All mentors transporting buddies must possess a valid driver's license and present proof of auto insurance; a record of insurance will be maintained in the mentor's file and will be updated on an annual basis.
- All mentors transporting buddies will undergo a driving record check and have a good driving record (no major citations).

- Mentors transporting buddies must obey all traffic laws, and use seat belts at all times.
- Mentors transporting buddies must avoid taking medication or using any other substances that might impair their ability to drive.
- If an accident occurs while the mentor is engaged in mentoring, it should be reported to the Executive Director promptly.
- The mentor must carry a copy of the buddy's emergency contact information in the transporting automobile or on their person at all times in case of emergency.

Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy

Mentors are expected to be positive role models and are therefore held to a very high standard of behavior in their own schools and in the community:

Buddies and mentors are prohibited from using, possessing, transmitting or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol or possessing firearms while engaged in the mentoring relationship. Any suspected violations should be reported to the Executive Director.

- **Tobacco:** The intent of AFK is to create a smoke- and tobacco-free environment. To that end, smoking and the use of all tobacco products is prohibited and participants in the program must refrain from the use of such products while engaged in mentoring. The use of tobacco products includes but is not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, or other substances that contain tobacco.
- **Weapons, Firearms, and Other Dangerous Materials:** 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.
- **Alcohol:** A mentor should not attend or remain at an event where it is known that alcohol, or an illegal or prohibited substance is being consumed by a minor. The mentor is expected to remove himself/herself from the situation.

Any violation of this policy will result in immediate consequences and/or suspension/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.

Unacceptable Behavior Policy

It is the policy of AFK that unacceptable behaviors will not be tolerated on the part of mentors or buddies while participating in the program. This policy is in addition to behavioral requirements stipulated in other policies or procedures. This policy in no way is intended to replace or take precedence over other policies or procedures including, but not limited to, the following:

- Confidentiality Policy, Transportation Policy, Overnight Visits/Home Alone Policy, Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting Policy, Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy

A number of behaviors are regarded as incompatible with AFK goals, values, and program standards and therefore are considered unacceptable and **prohibited while participants are engaged in mentoring activities:**

- Unwelcome physical contact, such as inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, punching, and physical assault
- Unwelcome physical, verbal, visual, or behavioral mannerisms or conduct that denigrates, shows hostility, or aversion toward any individual
- Demeaning or exploitive behavior of either a sexual or nonsexual nature, including threats of such behavior
- Display of demeaning, suggestive, or pornographic material
- Taking part in disrespectful, demeaning actions or speech
- Intentional violation of any local, state, or federal law
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Possession of illegal substances

Any unacceptable behavior, as specified but not limited to the above, will result in a warning and/or disciplinary action including suspension or termination from participation in the mentoring program.



Athletes For Kids Matching Process



Athletes Recruited

Applications submitted. Candidates interviewed. Selected athletes are notified and invited to workshop.

Athletes attend training workshop, submit background check forms and bios. Criminal background check completed.

Consent forms are signed by athletes/athlete's parents and submitted with parent's background check forms.

Athlete attends mentor meetings.

Match Up Coordinator notifies athlete of potential match. Sends email with contacts and disabilities/abilities info.

Athlete contacts parent of child and sets up meeting with parents, away from the home without the child present.

Parents Inquire

Staff screens by phone.

Approved families are added to waiting list. Welcome packet emailed with forms and program information.

Criminal Background checks run on all adults living in child's household.

Match Up Coordinator sends 1-4 athlete bios to the family.

Parents choose athlete to interview and send selection to Match Up Coordinator.

Parents send in consent forms, transportation waivers, medical emergency contacts.

Parents of Child and Athlete Meet

Athlete notifies Match Up Coordinator that he/she wishes to continue within 48 HOURS of the parent/athlete meeting.

Match Up Coordinator notifies athlete to set up meeting with the child at the child's home.

Athlete contacts family.

Parents notify Match Up Coordinator that they want to continue within 48 HOURS of meeting athlete.

Athlete and Child Meet

Athlete notifies Match Up Coordinator that he/she wishes to continue within 48 HOURS of the athlete/child meeting.

Match Up Coordinator notifies athlete that match is finalized, defines transportation status (does athlete have parent's consent to drive child?) and instructs athlete to contact parents to set up regular meeting schedule.

Parents introduce the two at the family's home and allow them at least one half hour of one-to-one time together.

Parents notify Match Up Coordinator that they wish to finalize match within 48 HOURS of meeting child and athlete.



Match Complete

Athlete begins regular meetings with child

Closure Policy

It is the policy of AFK that all mentors and buddies 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 participants intend to have future contact informally beyond the match duration.

Closure can occur for any number of reasons including: ending of the contracted match duration; one or both participants do not want to continue the match; changes of circumstances in one or both of the match partner's lives; a mentor graduates; or an individual no longer meets the requirements for program participation. Hence, the match may end at the discretion of the mentor, buddy, parent/guardian, and/or Executive Director. It is left to the discretion of the Executive Director 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 buddy, and parent/guardian. If future contact is agreed upon, Athletes or Kids Youth Mentoring Program will not be responsible for monitoring and supporting the match after the match has ended.

Adult Leadership

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Mentor Match Coordinator
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In Closing . . .

Having a mentor in your child's life is a special experience.

Our goal is to establish a friendship between your child and his/her mentor that they both will cherish.

We are committed to providing support through all stages of the match. We look forward to working with you and your child, and we appreciate your support and involvement.

Welcome to the Athletes For Kids family!