



Crossover Mission, Inc.



Academic Mentoring (AMP) Program Training Guide & Minor Protection Policy 2022-23 School Year

Providing Support for Under-Resourced Learners

Crossover Academic Mentoring Program Introduction

The Crossover Academic Mentoring Program is aimed at literacy and mathematics development and academic empowerment of students in Indian River County ages eight and above who are at-risk of falling below their grade level and reaching their highest potential. Experience has shown that “students who scored in the highest percentile read the most and had encountered the most words. Likewise, the lowest-performing students in the class not only read the very least but also encountered a minimal amount of words” (The Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades, Boushey & Moser). Crossover Mission is developed and designed in cooperation with principals and educators from the School District of Indian River County, and in particular, those schools and personnel which directly impact the Crossover student population.

I. What is Academic Mentoring?

Academic mentoring is a one-on-one, caring, supportive partnership between a mentor and a student based on trust and whose purpose is to focus on the scholastic needs of the student toward achieving his or her fullest potential. A mentor is a wise and trusted adult with a commitment to provide guidance and support to the student.

Academic mentoring is a community development program, a powerful human force that can change the economic base of a community. Mentors can make a generational change in individuals and families. Mentors have the power and influence to change the negative cycles of their mentees. The impact of mentors in a well-structured mentor program is boundless and serves as a powerful low-cost, low-tech strategy to help rebuild the dreams of youth in at-risk situations.

Mentoring Statistics: According to the Youth.gov web site statistics uphold the idea that supportive, healthy relationships formed between mentors and mentees are both immediate and long-term and contribute to a host of benefits.

- Increased high school graduation rates.
- Lower high school dropout rates.
- Healthier relationships and lifestyle choices.
- Better attitude about school.
- Higher college enrollment rates and higher educational aspirations.
- Enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Improved behavior, both at home and at school.
- Stronger relationships with parents, teachers, and peers.
- Improved interpersonal skills.

- Decreased likelihood of initiating drug and alcohol use (MENTOR, 2009; Cavell, DuBois, Karcher, Keller, & Rhodes, 2009).

II. Goals of Academic Mentoring

- Improved reading skills.
- Improved grades overall.
- Improved test taking skills.
- Understanding the importance of decisions and academic achievement.
- Understanding and awareness of school safety and violence or bullying.
- Time management skills development.
- Keeping kids in school.
- Passing to the next grade level.
- Helping Crossover student players achieve academic eligibility to participate in school athletics.

III. Roles and Expectations of Academic Mentors:

The mentor must be a positive role model, someone with whom the student can identify. The mentor must display a positive image, one that can guide the student's behaviors and actions. Other roles include being a good listener, teacher, coach, advocate, and trustworthy adult companion.

Qualities of Successful Mentors Include:

1. Personally committed.
2. Consistent.
3. Accessible.
4. Flexible and open.
5. Having a sense of humor.
6. Persistent.
7. Respectful of youth.
8. Willing to listen.
9. Kind and patient.
10. Willing to accept different points of view.

Qualities of Unsuccessful Mentors Include:

1. Expecting too much. Trying to change the world overnight.
2. Expecting too little.
3. Being Judgmental.
4. Not taking time to build the relationship.
5. Not being trustworthy and not fulfilling promises.
6. Being a poor listener.
7. Exhibiting poor language skills and dressing inappropriately.
8. Trying to inflict personal beliefs on the student.
9. Having bad breath or body odor.

10. Being insincere.

Content taken from, A Training Guide for Mentors. Jay Smink, ©2009. National Dropout Prevention Center

IV. Code of Conduct with Youth and Children (Youth)

Crossover provides our youth with the highest quality services available. We are committed to creating an environment for youth that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success. No form of abuse will be tolerated. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with youth or any allegation of abuse will be taken seriously. Crossover will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation. Crossover reserves the right to dismiss any person from any event setting for any reason.

The Code of Conduct with Youth and Children outlines specific expectations of the employees and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

1. Youth will be treated with respect at all times.
2. Youth will be treated fairly regardless of age, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or religion.
3. Employees and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of displaying affection as outlined by Crossover later in this document.
4. Employees and volunteers will avoid affection with youth that cannot be observed by others.
5. Employees and volunteers will adhere to uniform standards of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined by Crossover.
6. Employees and volunteers will not stare at or comment on youth's bodies.
7. Employees and volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with youth.
8. Employees and volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of youth.
9. Employees, and volunteers will not have sexually-oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on Crossover Mission's property.
10. Employees and volunteers will not have secrets with youth, and will only give de minimis gifts, with prior permission from Crossover and the parent.
11. Employees and volunteers will comply with Crossover Mission's policies regarding interactions with youth outside of our programs.
12. Employees and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth.
13. Employees, and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with youth in a private setting. Employees, and volunteers will use common areas when working with individual youth.
14. Employees and volunteers will not abuse youth in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:

Physical abuse: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints;

Verbal abuse: degrading, threatening, cursing;

Sexual abuse: inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually-oriented conversations;

Mental abuse: shaming, humiliation, cruelty; and
Neglect: withholding food, water, shelter

IV. Policies for Working with Youth

Crossover Mission Adult-to-Child Ratios for Operations

1. A minimum of one trained adult will oversee 25 or fewer student athletes at one time. Because of the one-to-one nature of academic mentoring, this situation will rarely occur. During basketball training, Crossover **best practices** dictate coach to youth athlete ratio will be 1:15 or fewer.
1. No more than 25 student athletes in a group or classroom at any one time.

Physical Contact

Crossover Mission’s physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youth, employees, and volunteers. Crossover Mission encourages appropriate physical contact with youth and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by employees or volunteers towards youth in the organization’s programs will result in disciplinary action.

Crossover Mission’s policies for appropriate and inappropriate physical interactions are:

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pats on the shoulder or back ● Handshakes & fist bumping ● High-fives and hand slapping ● Verbal praise ● Touching hands, shoulders, and arms ● Arms around shoulders ● Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kisses ● Showing affection in isolated area ● Wrestling ● Piggyback rides ● Tickling ● Touching of face, neck, head or hair ● Allowing a youth to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg ● Any type of massage given by or to a youth ● Any hugging or affection unwanted by the youth, staff or volunteer ● Compliments relating to physique or body development ● Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas

Verbal Interactions

Employees and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to youth in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Employees and volunteers must not initiate sexually-oriented conversations with youth. Employees and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with youth.

Crossover Mission’s policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive reinforcement ● Appropriate jokes ● Encouragement ● Praise of a specific action vs the person ● Use of growth-mindset vs fixed-mindset language ● Constructive Criticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Name-calling, gossiping, or cursing ● Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youth in the personal problems or issues of employees, and volunteers ● Secrets ● Off-color or sexual jokes ● Shaming or belittling ● Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth ● Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family

One-on-One Outside Interactions

Employees, and volunteers should observe the following additional guidelines to manage the risk of abuse or false allegations of abuse:

<i>Additional Guidelines for One-on-One Outside Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When meeting one-on-one with a youth, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others. ● Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes. ● If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by. ● Inform other employees and volunteers that you are alone with a youth and ask them to randomly drop in. ● Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

Off-site Contact

Crossover Mission has determined that the following forms of off-site contact are appropriate and inappropriate:

<i>Appropriate Off-site Contact</i>	<i>Inappropriate Off-site Contact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taking groups of youth on an outing ● Attending sporting activities with groups of youth ● Attending functions at a youth's home, with parents present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visiting one youth in the youth's home, without a parent/guardian present ● Entertaining one youth in the home of volunteers ● A lone youth spending the night with volunteers

In addition, when off-site contact is unavoidable, the following steps must be followed:

1. Supervisors must approve off-site contact.
2. Employees and volunteers must have the parents'/guardians' permission to engage in off-site contact with the youth.

Overnight Retreats and Events

Crossover Mission provides opportunities for student athletes to participate in some overnight athletic camps, travel ball and retreats, off-site and out of town. The following activities are appropriate and inappropriate:

<i>Appropriate Overnight Contact</i>	<i>Inappropriate Off-site Contact</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taking groups of youth to an overnight camp, tournament, retreat. ● Attending sporting activities with groups of youth and appropriate numbers of chaperones. ● Attending functions at a youth's home, with parents present ● Single gender room options with appropriate chaperones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A Crossover staff member or volunteer taking one youth to an overnight camp, tournament or retreat without a parent present. ● Entertaining one youth overnight in the home of volunteers or staff ● A lone youth spending the night outside the home with volunteers or staff ● Multiple gender room options with or without chaperones

When engaging in overnight events, Crossover management and chaperones must adhere to the following rules of contact in housing situations:

1. Crossover supervisors must approve all overnight contact including housing details and have written parent consent/waivers for all events.

2. Employees and volunteers must have the parents’/guardians’ permission to engage in overnight contact with the youth.
3. No shared beds between adults and student athletes.
4. At least one Staff Member per house or hotel floor will be awake at all times to provide rotating supervision. Non staff chaperones will stay awake until all youth in their care are asleep. Monitoring staff will check sleeping rooms overnight at times not pre-announced to see that everyone is in their own bedspace and that boundaries are maintained.
5. No group showers are allowed unless in an approved locker room with adult supervision.

Electronic Communication

All communication between employees, volunteers, and youth must be transparent. Volunteers may not engage in inappropriate or personal conversations with youth through private electronic communication.

The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication:

<i>Appropriate Electronic Communication</i>	<i>Inappropriate Electronic Communication</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A text or email between a volunteer and a student, as long as the parent is included in the message. ● Staff sending and replying to emails and text messages from youth to aid or provide information regarding youth events. ● Communicating through “organization group pages” on GroupMe, Facebook, Instagram ● “Private” profiles for employees and volunteers which youth cannot access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments ● Sexually-oriented conversations ● Text or email communication without the parent on the message without parent consent ● Posting pictures of organization participants on social media sites without staff and parent approval ● Posting inappropriate comments on pictures.

Gift Giving

Employees, and volunteers should only give gifts to groups of youth, and only under the following circumstances (gifts include food or snacks):

1. Administration must be made aware of and approve the gift.
2. Parents must be notified

V. Program Guidelines and Rules:

Ideally, the mentoring program will match one child to one mentor and every week, that mentor will work with the designated child. We will strive for designated, one-on-one mentoring each week. There will be absences and some shifting from week to week, however, children work best when there is consistency. In addition, relationships between students and mentors are built over time. It takes a commitment on the part of the volunteer to make the program an academic success for that student. This is an act of grace and love on the part of the volunteer. Crossover Mission administration deeply appreciates and values such a commitment, and we request that commitment be for no less than one semester. In addition, the following guidelines are of utmost importance.

As a volunteer for the Crossover Academic Mentoring Program, you should strive to achieve and abide by the following rules:

1. Attend weekly mentoring sessions.
2. Accept supervision by Crossover staff.
3. Make a legitimate effort to be on time.
4. Be responsible and act with proper consideration for the students.
5. Attend planned training sessions.
6. you will be late or unable to attend, please communicate directly with the Program Administrator by phone, e-mail, or text.
7. Provide the student with a positive role model.
8. Instill a sense of responsibility in the youth by allowing the student to make decisions (when appropriate).
9. Reinforce the efforts of the student's school and teachers.
10. Create an understanding for improved social and school behaviors.
11. All mentors are called Mr./Miss/Mrs.
12. Avoid deep, personal, and sexual discussions.
13. Academic mentoring must achieve results. Stay on task.
14. When a mentor suspects or observes unusual or life-threatening circumstances, always communicate with the Crossover Program Administrators (Mrs. Cathy De Schouwer and Mr. Antoine Jennings) who will handle the situation directly or seek specialized guidance. **DO NOT HANDLE THE SITUATION YOURSELF.** Examples of difficult situations include:
 - a. Evidence of sexual or family abuse.
 - b. Evidence of alcohol and drug abuse.
 - c. Evidence of pregnancy.
 - d. Evidence of theft.
 - e. Threats of suicide. (You want to pick up on these early!)
 - f. Involvement in gangs.

- g. Evidence of school violence.
15. All tutoring and mentoring take place in open rooms and spaces. Mentors are not to be alone with a student or in a closed room at any time. There must be at least two Crossover adults in a room at any one time. Mentors must watch out for each other and for the safety of each student. Do not allow a situation in which a mentor or student is vulnerable to misbehavior or unfounded accusations. If a mentor is alone with a student and an accusation against a mentor is made, there is no way to disprove misbehavior and judgments usually go in favor of the student. Protect yourself. Do not allow yourself to be alone in a closed room with a student.
 16. Mentors are not to leave the premises with a student at any time. If unusual circumstances arise, the Program Administrator must be notified immediately and a decision will be made as to permission.
 17. Volunteers (Academic Mentors/Tutors/Coaches) are not to communicate with students via social media or electronic devices after normal Crossover activities and normal work hours. Any necessary communication after Crossover Activities or after normal work hours must be through the parent. Under no circumstances are personal, private, or sexual subjects to be communicated via electronic devices. No photographs of an illicit nature are to be circulated or exchanged between students and mentors/volunteers/coaches. Any violation of this rule will result in termination in membership in the Crossover organization.
 18. Any incidences of suspicious or inappropriate behavior of a tutor/mentor/coach or student will result in disciplinary actions which will include a full investigation by law enforcement and termination from the Crossover Mission program. A review procedure will take place by the Crossover Board of Directors within a reasonable period of time following any incident to determine if actions need to be taken to prevent any similar future incident. All volunteers and employees have a direct responsibility to report any suspicious behavior or incidences immediately to the Executive Director (Cathy De Schouwer) or Director of Operations (Antoine Jennings). Volunteers and employees are not to handle the situation personally. A volunteer's responsibility is to report the information to the leadership and leave it in their hands to respond in an appropriate manner.
 19. Background checks and criminal investigations are performed on all volunteers and personnel who will have direct contact with young people in the Crossover Mission athletic and tutoring programs.

VI. Safety and Evacuation Procedures:

- A. **Fire or other Unsafe Building Conditions:** In the event of fire or other unsafe conditions at the site of tutoring, each mentor together with his or her student must evacuate and move away from the building. Do not take elevators. The Program Administrator will count mentors, students and other volunteers against the sign in sheets to insure that all have evacuated safely. No one is to leave without consent from the Program Administrator. The Program Administrator will call 911 immediately. An incident report will be filed by the Program Administrator.
- B. **Safety Incidents and Communication:** All mentors, volunteers, and staff must report any incidents of safety violations. An incident report must be completed within 24 hours of the incident.
- C. **Injury or Illness procedures:** In the event that a student is injured or becomes ill, the following procedures must be followed:
 1. Parents/Guardians will be notified immediately. An Incident Report must be filled out within 24 hours if a student is injured while taking part in a Crossover activity. Immediate emergency action will be taken if necessary and may include hospitalization.*

2. If a child becomes sick, parents or guardians will be notified for immediate pickup.

***Responsibility of Administration Only!**

Thank you for your attention to the material in this guide. We appreciate your time and adherence to these important guidelines. Most of all, we appreciate your willingness to help mold precious lives. Please fill out and sign the acknowledgement page at the end of this guide and turn in.



Academic Mentor Acknowledgement and Agreement

I have read the Crossover Academic Mentoring Program Training Guide and understand the guidelines as outlined. I agree, to the best of my abilities, to serve as a volunteer for the Crossover Mission, Inc. academic mentoring program and will abide by the rules as stated in the Guide.

Print Full Name

Date

Signature

