



Parent/Guardian Information Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Congratulations! Your child has been nominated to participate in the TeamMates Mentoring Program.

TeamMates Mentoring Program matches a community volunteer with a student to serve as a one-to-one mentor. A mentor is someone who serves as a role model, friend, champion, coach, or guide. A mentor takes a personal interest in the growth and development of the student. We want every TeamMates match to be a long-term commitment, with the hope they continue to meet through the student's high school graduation. You can learn more about TeamMates at <https://teammates.org/> or view a short video that describes the role of a TeamMates mentor here: <https://vimeo.com/345518568>

The TeamMates mentor will meet with your child once a week during school hours, on school grounds. Communication takes place through the school. During extenuating circumstances, parents/guardians can grant the opportunity for their child to meet with their mentor on a safe video-conferencing platform reinforced by the safety procedures of TeamMates. On rare occasions, mentors and mentees may have an opportunity to meet outside of school at a TeamMates-sponsored group event with your written permission. Individual outside of school meetings between mentors and mentees are not allowed. If at any time you have questions or concerns, please contact your program coordinator or the **TeamMates Safety and Ethics Hotline 1-888-788-7727**.

We hope you agree to have your child become a part of TeamMates Mentoring and offer support and encouragement to make this a successful experience for them. Please complete permission for your child to participate in TeamMates Mentoring by using the link below (Insert Link). If technology is not available to complete this task, please communicate with your child's TeamMates coordinator. In order to better serve students and assess program effectiveness, we request permission to use your student's academics, economic and behavioral information. This information will only be reported in a general way for qualitative data purposes and will not identify individual students.

Thank you for your support of TeamMates Mentoring Program.



***Guide to TeamMates Mentoring Program
For Parents and Guardians***

This Parent Guide will help you learn about TeamMates Mentoring Program, how our program works, and the important role that you play in making the experience a successful one for your child. If you have questions after reading this guide do not hesitate to contact TeamMates staff.

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About TeamMates Mentoring Program

Who We Are

TeamMates Mentoring Program is a school-based, one-to-one mentoring program that began in 1991. Tom and Nancy Osborne founded TeamMates Mentoring Program in an effort to provide support and encouragement to school-aged youth. The goal of the program is to see youth graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education. To reach this goal, youth meet one time per week with a caring adult who serves as a mentor. Mentors are volunteers from the community who have dedicated themselves to making a difference in the life of a young person. Mentors support the strengths of the youth and help build a sense of hope, purpose and vision. The youth in the TeamMates program are called mentees.

We have more than 10,000 mentor/mentee matches meeting in schools across multiple states.

Our Mission

The mission of TeamMates Mentoring Program is to positively impact the world by inspiring youth to reach their full potential through mentoring.

Our Core Values

Commitment to Youth -- We are committed to a long-term relationship, serving youth with compassion and respect.

Safety -- The safety and protection of the mentee and mentor is first priority. As a school-based mentoring program, we meet at and communicate through the school.

Integrity and Trust -- We are committed to integrity and trust in all relationships.

Inclusion -- We are committed to the inclusion of mentees and mentors from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Program Details

Why was my child selected for TeamMates?

All children need the support of caring adults in order to be successful, not only within their family but at school and in their communities. Your child may have been nominated by you, someone in the school, or asked for a mentor. Having a variety of people positively involved in a child's life provides that child with new opportunities and experiences that will reinforce their growth and self-confidence. A mentor can give your child someone else to talk to — a safe, concerned, and responsible friend who can listen and be supportive. A mentor can also help your child thrive in school by being encouraging, focusing on strengths and talents, and by helping your child to think about future goals and dreams.

What is a mentor?

A mentor is a caring and responsible adult 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.

A mentor develops this friendship with a young person—whom we call a “mentee”— in order to help the child be successful at home, at school, and in the community. By developing this positive relationship, a mentor can help a young person identify strengths and interests.

Mentors are not meant to take on the role of parent, guardian, or teacher. A mentor's main role is to spend time with the child doing positive and fun activities at school that help the mentee become more self-confident and identify interests and strengths. By doing this, the mentor becomes part of the team of caring adults who support the healthy development of your child: parents, relatives, teachers, coaches, faith leaders and friends.

Who serves as mentors?

Mentors are as varied as the people in our community, but they all share the desire to make a positive difference in the life of a young person. TeamMates Mentors are 18 or older, male and female, young and old, single and married, from diverse cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, and with a wide range of skills and interests. Mentors are carefully screened, selected, and given initial and ongoing training so that they are prepared for the mentoring relationship.

How are matches made?

Prior to being matched, all TeamMates mentors and youth go through an orientation and training that prepares them for the journey ahead. During this time, we get to know new participants and learn about their personality and strengths so that we can match them with someone they will enjoy spending time with. At the first match meeting, mentor and mentee will document their commitment to building their TeamMates relationship when they sign the TeamMates Mentee/Mentor Agreement, found on page 8 of this handbook. Parents and guardians have an opportunity to meet in person with their child's mentor if they desire, but the school-based relationship is between the mentor and mentee. Mentors are a mentor to the student, not the family or siblings. It is TeamMates' policy to match adult males with male students and adult females with female students.

Where does mentoring take place?

TeamMates is a school-based program and the meetings between the mentor and the mentee happen at school. The TeamMates mentor will be meeting with your student once a week during school hours, on school grounds. Should circumstances prevent in-person meetings at school, TeamMates can offer video conference options in order to maintain the mentoring relationship. Upon being matched with a mentor, your child will receive access through their school email account to TeamMates Mentee Portal. Mentors should not have contact with your student outside of school through phone, text or email unless they are in high school and you have given written permission. You will be notified of all TeamMates-sponsored group meetings. A TeamMates Group Activity form must be completed and submitted every time matches meet off school grounds for a group event and returned to the TeamMates Program Coordinator before the event takes place. Mentors and mentees meet only in public places, not private homes. Individual outside of school meetings between mentors and mentees are not allowed.

What do matches do when they meet?

Mentors and mentees begin by just getting to know one another, learning about each other's interests, strengths, likes and dislikes, and talking about when they will meet and what they want to do when they get together. As the relationship develops, mentors may help mentees set some personal goals that they want to accomplish. Mentors and mentees plan activities each week and the focus of their time together is one of friendship. Just having a friend to talk to can help young people gain confidence and develop new interests. Regardless of the specific activities, TeamMates mentors are encouraged to take a relationship-centered approach in meetings with their mentee.

How do I know the program is safe?

We know that you are putting your trust in our program and in the mentor we assign to your child. For nearly 30 years, TeamMates has been in the business of finding qualified, safe, and dedicated adults who truly want to support the strengths and interests of young people.

Everyone who wants to be a volunteer mentor goes through these steps:

- Complete application
- Criminal background check
- Three personal/employer references checked
- Mentor interview
- Mentor Training session including information about safety and TeamMates policy

Safety doesn't stop when the mentor is matched with a child. Our staff checks in with all mentors and mentees as long as the match is active. These check-ins help 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 TeamMates Program Coordinator any time you have a concern or question or call the **TeamMates Safety and Ethics Hotline 1-888-788-7727**.

We are confident that our volunteer screening procedures and the program rules and guidelines we have developed ensure that our program is safe for your child. We ask all our parents to help keep it this way by:

- Reading the program policies/guidelines at the end of this guide.
- Not approving any activities outside of school other than those that the program has approved and for which paperwork has been provided.
- Not providing gifts to the mentor nor expecting the mentor to provide gifts or money to your child.
- Not connecting with the mentor privately. The school-based relationship is between the mentor and mentee, with communication through the school.
- Keeping the lines of communication between you and your child open so that they feel comfortable letting you know if there's a problem.
- Reporting any concerns to the mentoring program staff immediately, such as a change in your child's behavior or a concern about how the match is progressing.
TeamMates Safety and Ethics Hotline 1-888-788-7727.

TeamMates Works!

TeamMates has been collecting general information on the success of mentor matches for many years. Your support of this endeavor is important. Please say "YES" on the permission slip to allow TeamMates to collect the grades, attendance and discipline reports on your child.

This data is strictly confidential and used for reporting purposes. We also survey youth about their satisfaction with the program and offer opportunities to participate in Gallup Strengths. If you have questions, please contact the Safety and Ethics Hotline 1-888-788-7727.

What is a parent's or guardian's role in the mentoring relationship?

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

Here are some specific ways that you can help make your child's mentoring experience successful:

With your child:

- Encourage your child to keep all meetings with the mentor.
- Be positive about the relationship, and let your child see you are happy they have a mentor in their life.
- Ask open-ended questions about how things are going. For example, "What was the best thing you did with your mentor today?"
- Listen to and be supportive of your child's feelings. Some youth are shy or nervous with their mentor at first and may go through periods of "testing" the mentor as the relationship develops. Be patient and encouraging. If your child continues to have trouble with the relationship, talk to the program coordinator.

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 become your personal friend or counselor.
- Contact information is not exchanged between mentor and mentee, or mentor and parent. Communication is through your local TeamMates program coordinator.

With TeamMates staff:

- Complete and return 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 permission form.
- Let the program 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.

Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns?

Your main point of contact will be the TeamMates Coordinator. The coordinator conducts check-ins, provides solutions to problems, and coordinates the support you receive from other staff. You are welcome to attend a mentor or mentee training at any time.

Key Policies and Guidelines

Permission to Participate in TeamMates: We require parent/guardian permission for your child to participate in the TeamMates Mentoring program. You will only complete one permission form for the duration of your child's participation in TeamMates unless they change to a different school district with a TeamMates program.

Out of School Activities/Events: TeamMates is a school-based mentoring program. Meetings outside of school are rare and occur in a TeamMates-sponsored group setting, requiring written permission from a parent/guardian and the approval of the TeamMates coordinator. Your permission can be provided via online or paper options. No individual outside of school match meetings are allowed.

Out of School Communication: All matches have the option to communicate with each other in a safe, contact-protected way through our TeamMates database. Only high school students can communicate with their mentor via phone, text or email **and** you must give written permission for them to do so.

Social Media: Your child may not be "friends" with their mentor on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. or other social media.

Gift Giving: TeamMates mentors are not to give gifts to their mentees, nor mentees to mentors. Gifts do not include items of nominal value provided for immediate consumption such as food and beverage, admission to events or activities, and supplies needed for mentoring activities.

Physical Contact: Mentors are specifically trained in appropriate boundaries for physical contact. We encourage physical contact be limited to a pat on the back or a handshake.

Image Release: In addition to the general permissions you have signed for the school and TeamMates program, TeamMates requires a specific image release from you for the use of your child's image for photographs, recordings, TV appearances, newsletters, websites, etc.

Secondary Organization: If your child has a relationship with the mentor outside of the TeamMates program, such as scouting, youth group or coach, you must inform the Program Coordinator so that a Secondary Organization form can be completed. This helps TeamMates clarify what contact is specific to mentoring.

End of Match: TeamMates' goal is for matches to stay together through high school graduation. Matches can end for a variety of reasons: a family move, a mentor's life circumstances, or sometimes a match just doesn't "click." If a match ends early, and the child is interested in a new match, TeamMates keeps the child enrolled in the program to rematch them as soon as possible. When matches do end, TeamMates offers a structured process of for all. Parents/guardians will be notified, in writing, when a match ends.

MENTEE/MENTOR AGREEMENT

This agreement is to be discussed and signed by all parties in the presence of the mentee, the mentor and the TeamMates Coordinator.

MENTEE

I, _____, agree to work with my mentor and the people at my *(Print Mentee first & last name)* school to be as successful as I can be.

I agree to:

- commit to a **minimum** of three years with the goal of staying with my mentor through high school graduation;
- follow my school's rules (or Code of Conduct) at school and TeamMates events;
- cooperate with TeamMates policies and procedures;
- meet with my mentor weekly;
- attend mentee training;
- ask my parent or guardian, my mentor, or my school if I need help;

Mentee Signature (first & last name)

Grade

Date

MENTOR

I, _____, agree to assist my student any way I can.
(Print Mentor first & last name)

I agree to:

- commit to a **minimum** of three years with the goal of staying with my mentee through high school graduation;
- follow my school's rules (or Code of Conduct) at school and TeamMates events;
- cooperate with TeamMates policies and procedures;
- meet with my student weekly;
- participate in one learning opportunity per year;
- provide encouragement and support;
- encourage my student to graduate from high school.

Mentor Signature

Date

School Representative Signature

School

Date

Household Information – Information in this box is helpful to TeamMates but is *not required for your student to participate in TeamMates and will not be shared on an individual basis.*

Household Size – How many people (including your student) live in your current residence?

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9+ Prefer not to respond

Household Income – What is the total income of all people living in your current residence?

Under \$15,000 \$35,000 to \$49,999 Prefer not to respond

\$15,000 to \$24,999 \$50,000 to \$74,999

\$25,000 to \$34,999 More than \$75,000

Yes **No** Does your child have any allergies/medical conditions we should be aware of?
If yes, please list: _____

Yes **No** Did either parent of this child graduate from a four-year institution?
If yes, please list: _____

- Yes** **No** I give permission for my student to join TeamMates Mentoring Program.
- Yes** **No** I have read and understand the Mentor/Mentee Agreement that will be reviewed with my student.
- Yes** **No** I give permission to allow post-secondary institutions selected by TeamMates to send my student information on attending their school, setting up college visits, and available scholarships to apply for.
- Yes** **No** I give permission for my student to receive personal access to the TeamMates Portal database, to communicate with their mentor.
- Yes** **No** I agree that any messaging and/or virtual match meetings within the TeamMates Portal may be monitored and/or recorded to ensure the safety of my student.
- Yes** **No** I give permission for my student to be photographed, recorded on film, and/or taped while participating in TeamMates-related activities.
- Yes** **No** I give permission to use my student’s discipline records for general evaluation purposes. *
- Yes** **No** I give permission to use my student’s academic and economic records for general evaluation purposes. *
- Yes** **No** I give permission to share my student’s grades and attendance information with my student’s mentor.
- Yes** **No** I agree to allow my student to participate in the Annual Program Satisfaction Survey conducted by the TeamMates Mentoring Program.
- Yes** **No** I agree to allow my student to participate in the Clifton Strengths Assessment conducted by the TeamMates Mentoring Program.

**Confidentiality of student records is strictly maintained. The information is for evaluating program impact.*

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____