SAFE MENTORING

The Board of Education is committed to providing to its students opportunities for mentoring by individuals from within and/or outside of the District and has thereby determined that it is in the best interest of the District to establish a formal mentoring program. The mentoring program will comply with the following:

Definitions

a. “Prospective mentor” shall mean an individual who is currently applying to volunteer to help a child or a group of children in the mentoring program for a period of time. Such help shall include, but not be limited to, being a positive role model for youth, building relationships with youth, and providing youth with academic assistance and exposure to new experiences and examples of opportunity that enhance the ability of children to become responsible adults.

b. “Mentoring program” shall mean the formalized program established by the District that matches youth with adult volunteers with the purpose of providing such youth with positive role models to enhance their development.

c. “Applicants” shall mean any prospective mentor applying for a position within the mentoring program.

Prospective Mentors

The mentoring program shall conduct criminal history record checks upon prospective mentors as follows:

- Each prospective mentor shall be required to submit fingerprints, the appropriate processing fee and any such other information as required by the office and division of criminal justice services;
- The mentoring program shall provide each prospective mentor with fingerprint authorization forms and instructions to be taken, along with the processing fee, to the District’s local BOCES for completion and submission to the division of criminal justice services for a search.

No Criminal History Record

Only Applicants who receive a report back from the division of criminal justice services of no criminal history record may be considered by the mentoring program for an opportunity to volunteer as a mentor.

Confidentiality

Any criminal history record of prospective mentors shall remain confidential pursuant to applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations. Unless otherwise authorized by law, criminal history records shall not be disclosed to individuals other than authorized personnel and shall not be published.
Disclosure to Parents

The District shall provide every custodial parent or guardian of every child participating in its mentoring program with a description of the type of criminal background checks conducted on prospective mentors and what source was utilized to conduct those checks.

Appointment of Mentors and Entitlement to Indemnification

The position of mentor is a volunteer position. All mentors must be approved and appointed by the Board of Education. Upon appointment by the Board of Education, mentors shall be entitled to the protections set forth in Education Law Section 3023 that are granted to authorized participants in school volunteer programs provided the mentor was acting in the discharge of his/her authorized volunteer duties and meets all other requirements set forth in Education Law Section 3023 for entitlement to such protections.

Ref: Social Services Law § 390-e
Correction Law § 752
Executive Law § 837-8-a

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