



## FIRST STEPS- FALL 2020 MENTORING OPTIONS

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Thank you for your continued commitment to Kids Hope USA, your church volunteers, your partner school and the children you serve. As we're hearing from educators, they're telling us they value their Kids Hope USA mentors, and they're anticipating a need for more as children return to school with increased social and emotional needs as a result of the pandemic. As you begin to prepare for the school year, please keep the following in mind:

- **Be flexible** - We encourage everyone to remain flexible, knowing that the ideas we're sharing, and your school's requirements will most likely change as we move further into fall semester. A willingness to try something new may be necessary in order to reach the kids.
- **Be open** – Expect that God will open doors and opportunities you haven't planned for or anticipated.
- **Pray** – Enlist your prayer partners and your entire church body to be praying for the school and your program.
- **Practice understanding** – The school faculty is busier than ever as they prepare for a unique school year. They're having to work through various scenarios (alternate days, combined online/in-person, parent choice, staffing for the potential options, establishing health and safety protocols, etc.). Children may be limited to certain parts of the building and be required to eat lunch in the classroom. Basically, everything that was already a monumental task has been intensified, and the faculty is under tremendous stress. And this doesn't even take into account their personal lives (health issues, having their own families, etc.).
- **Lean in more** – Churches and volunteers with Kids Hope USA already care about their communities, and you have a great opportunity to demonstrate your love and concern at a new level by leaning in, not out, during this difficult time. As you begin to connect with your school, you'll be able to ask, "What can we do to help you?" You can then share with your supervising pastor the needs you're hearing from the school, and help your church be an even greater partner.
- **Be patient** – As you reach out, anticipate that your school contact may be too busy to talk right now. See the sample emails below to help you compose your initial communication to the school and your volunteers but make them your own. Your communication to your school should be a gentle ask - letting them know you don't want to be in their way, but you want to be part of the solution.
- **Be ready** – When you're able to schedule a conversation, have a list of items to discuss:
  - If school is open, will you be welcome in the school as an essential/strategic partner?
  - If traditional in-person mentoring isn't a fit (or only a partial fit), explain the various mentoring options and work with your school to determine what would work best, knowing that things could change. Reach out to your Kids Hope team if you need assistance or if you would like us to participate in a Zoom meeting.
  - Share the appropriate KHUSA mentoring options documents with the school during your meeting.
- **Be student focused** – In addition to wanting the school staff to know we care, we want the kids to know we care, that their mentor still wants to be with them and wants to stay in contact. We want to shine the light of Christ in the school environment in any way possible.