



BEST PRACTICES

LEADERSHIP

Under the leadership of the pastor, the program director commits to upholding the standards of KHUSA as well as building a team of people to grow and sustain a KHUSA school-based program. Valuing and nurturing relationships with the volunteers and the school is a core practice for a strong program. As the program leader, the director must stay current on KHUSA standards and practices communicated through the director website portal, monthly newsletters, webinars, and other communication with KHUSA program support. The director also provides requested feedback to KHUSA by responding to surveys and keeping the Volunteer Center on the website portal up to date.

PARTNERSHIPS

The pastor, director, and volunteers work to build a caring relationship marked by mutual respect with the school community. As church members enter the partner school, they go in as guests demonstrating understanding and respect for the people and policies of the school community and for the practice of the separation of church and state. Respecting the school community results in a deeper relationship and allows the mentoring program to grow stronger and last longer. The director must provide the school with the most updated forms necessary for program communication and acquiring parent/guardian permission. The school provides a place for mentoring so that no mentor is ever alone with a student.

COMMUNICATION

The supervising pastor is vital in helping the director have access to the marketing and communication resources at the church, as well as in a key position to elevate the ministry to the church most broadly. The director should develop or recruit the skills necessary to communicate about the partnership, becoming confident in sharing the mission, vision, and stories of KHUSA in order to inspire the congregation.

RECRUITING

The pastor and director should share a growth perspective by working to expand the program to meet the needs of the students at the partner school, with the pastor casting the vision to reach the community. The director recruits mentors exclusively from the partner church with a year-long recruitment strategy.

SCREENING

Screening requirements have become more rigorous in youth serving organizations over the years. Proper screening looks at two dimensions of the potential mentor: suitability and safety. Suitability for a mentoring relationship includes things like having the right temperament and personality to develop a caring relationship, and safety encompasses the factors related to past abuse or neglect of children. The KHUSA screening process looks carefully at both dimensions and must be followed for every potential mentor. Following the application, reference checks, and interview, the pastor must also approve all mentors.

MENTOR TRAINING

Every mentor must receive KHUSA mentor training. Training helps mentors develop relationships with their students as well as manage the expectations of prospective mentors. KHUSA training helps shape a mentor's motivation coming into the relationship and helps establish goals which are realistic and consistent with the program.



MATCHING

Matching a mentor and student must be intentional and in partnership with the school contact, using knowledge of common interests or experiences and/or considering the interpersonal skills of the mentor learned through the mentor screening process. Wisdom is gained from prayer regarding the match.

MATCH SUPPORT & MONITORING

Match support provides mentors with ongoing advice, problem solving, training, and monitoring throughout the life of the mentoring relationship. Relationships receiving adequate support and monitoring in a program are more successful and lead to more positive outcomes for the student. Close monitoring can assist a program in discovering potential areas of concern, including relationships that are struggling to bond and relationships that may not be following program expectations. Mentors must document each meeting at school via the Daily Progress Report, and directors must review those weekly and follow up on any concerns promptly.

CLOSURE

Closure is a critical component for all student-mentor relationships as unfinished endings can create poor outcomes for students. Using KHUSA resources, directors must help mentors bring each year to a healthy close.

PRAYER

Prayer is one of the most important gifts that we can give to a child, which is why prayer partners are so important to the KHUSA program. Each mentor/student match needs an assigned prayer partner. Prayer partners benefit from understanding their role, and pray more effectively when they receive communication, encouragement, and training. Without sharing any of the student's identifying information, a mentor may share the student's highs and lows with the prayer partner, how God is showing up in the life of the child, and where there's a heightened need for God's presence, guidance, or provision. A mentor should speak about the child the way they'd hope someone would speak to a stranger about their own family's successes and struggles.

RECORD KEEPING

The director must maintain a locked or password-protected filing system for volunteer and student files and the church must retain these records for a period of ten years (or meet the requirements of the state if higher). Record keeping and confidentiality are critical components to protect program participants and operate within the bounds of the law. Information that is gathered from both students and volunteers must be used only for the purpose for which it is collected. Directors must use the most recent forms that are updated to industry standards. In addition, volunteers are to be added to the Volunteer Center, which allows volunteers to access online resources, receive the mentor newsletter, be invited to webinars and prayer calls, and be part of the bigger mission of KHUSA.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Volunteers need encouragement throughout the year. Encouragement and appreciation increase a volunteer's desire to be part of the KHUSA program on a long-term basis. Directors will successfully meet this need by getting to know the volunteers and what makes them feel valued.

TRACKING PROGRESS

Directors should understand the different types of program evaluation tools available and be intentional in evaluating their program annually. By tracking and evaluating program progress, the director will be better able to decide what needs attention and areas for potential growth.