

Learning Bridge Expectations, Guidelines, and Policies

Employees, Volunteers, and Board Members shall:

1. Treat students and their caregivers with respect at all times.
2. Treat students and their caregivers fairly regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, relationship status, or physical abilities.
3. Not have any secrets with a student.
4. Not swear or tell off-color jokes in the presence of students or their caregivers.
5. Not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of students or caregivers.
6. Not stare or comment on a student's body.
7. Maintain appropriate boundaries with children. Appropriate standards of affection help promote a positive, nurturing environment for children while protecting them from harm and protecting employees and volunteers from misunderstandings. Volunteers are encouraged to discuss appropriate affection with the caregiver and the student, and before initiating in any physical contact, the employee, volunteer, or board member must ask and obtain the student's permission.
 - a. Appropriate physical interactions include: side hugs, pats on the shoulder, back, or head; high-fives, hand-slapping, handshakes; verbal praise; holding hands with young children in escorting situations; allowing kindergarten-aged children to sit on adult's knees.
 - b. Inappropriate physical interactions include: frontal hugs; kisses; showing affection in isolated areas; allowing children older than kindergarten-aged to sit on adult's knees; wrestling, piggyback rides, tickling; any type of massage given to a child; any form of affection that is unwanted by anyone involved; compliments relating to physique or body development; touching bottom, chest, or genital areas.
8. Avoid affection that cannot be observed by a third party.
9. Not engage in any corporal punishment of a student.
10. Not abuse students in any way. Anyone who suspects that the student is experiencing abuse must report it to CPS 1-800-252-5400.
11. Keep information about a student or the student's caregiver or family strictly confidential. Confidentiality is extremely important. Tutors may discuss challenges and successes at tutor roundtables and seek support and resources from others, but no identifying information may be shared. Successes and stories are encouraged to be shared with the Learning Bridge board.
12. Shall not engage in any in-person activity with Learning Bridge unless he/she is either vaccinated or has received a negative COVID test within 48 hours of the activity. Employees, volunteers, and board members are expected to comply with all federal, state, and local guidelines concerning COVID-19 if/when engaging in any in-person activity with Learning Bridge, including (as applicable) wearing a mask,

staying home if you are sick, and refraining from meeting in person if you have recently been exposed to someone with COVID.

Primary Expectations of Volunteers

In order to be a successful tutor, you must understand and accept the following expectations:

1. Commitment for Duration of School Year – It takes time to build trust and develop a relationship with a child that will make tutoring more successful. Because kids in foster care often encounter abrupt changes and disappointments, Learning Bridge aims to ensure that tutors are consistent and caring adults who follow through.
2. Weekly Meetings – We ask our volunteers to work directly with the student's caregiver to set up weekly tutoring sessions with the students.
3. Communicate with the Caregiver and Learning Bridge – It's important to have open and frequent communication with the student's caregiver to schedule tutoring sessions, evaluate progress, and discuss ways to improve the tutoring experience for everyone involved. If a volunteer has any questions or concerns, she should not hesitate to contact Learning Bridge. Volunteers may be asked for periodic updates and to participate in surveys so that Learning Bridge can evaluate and improve the program and volunteers' responses are extremely important.

Additional Guidelines and Policies for Volunteers:

1. Learning Bridge tutoring sessions are to be conducted virtually, UNLESS:
 - The volunteer is fully vaccinated,
 - The volunteer, caregiver, and student are comfortable meeting in person, and
 - Meeting in person does not conflict with any federal, state, or local guidelines or ordinances.
2. All in-person tutoring should be conducted in the student/caregivers' home. If the home environment is not conducive to tutoring, the volunteer and caregiver can agree to meet at another public location such as a library, school, or recreation center. A volunteer may not engage in in-person tutoring in their own home. If the volunteer engages in tutoring outside of the student's home, the volunteer will tell Learning Bridge where they are meeting.
3. The caregiver should be present during the duration of the tutoring session. The caregiver need not sit at the table but should be home and able to see/hear the tutoring session if they choose. Exceptions may be made for tutoring sessions with teenage students outside the home only with the written approval of the caregiver or CPS worker and Learning Bridge.
4. Volunteers should not allow any student to ride in his/her vehicle.
5. The volunteer should never be alone in a closed room with the student. Tutoring at the student/caregiver's home should be in a community space or with a door open.