

# Aspire Scholar Academy

## Mentor Guide

### MISSION OF ASPIRE SCHOLAR ACADEMY

To provide a positive learning environment and community in which to raise leaders who know who they are, discover their purpose, learn what they need to do and then do it.

### MENTORING PRINCIPLES

- (1) Families are the center of education
- (2) Classics are the preferred curriculum, and history is foundational.
- (3) The goal of the mentors is to teach students how to think and apply, rather than to fill them with knowledge. This is done through reading classics, discussions, field experience, and experiential learning.
- (4) Each person was born with greatness and came to earth with a specific mission to fill. This is foundational to all of our classes.
- (5) Students have agency as to whether or not they will learn. Education is the student's responsibility. Some classes may implement the use of extrinsic rewards as a short term motivator, however, ideally we want inspire students to learn skills they need for mission. We do not give grades.
- (6) High quality classes, avoiding busy work. Mentors receive training whenever possible.
- (7) Parents are the best examples of education. They are integral in their child's education through their own continuing education, helping serve the commonwealth, mentoring their children, and finding and living their own mission. Mentors may involve parents when possible
- (8) The spirit is the greatest teacher. The environment must be one such that the spirit can reside. True leaders must continually seek truth. Classes are LDS-gospel based, but all are welcome.

### MENTORING TIPS

- (1) Be personally interested in each student. Know them! Use your "Spiritual Eyes"
- (2) Know the which level your students are in

#### LEVEL 1 - typically ages 12 - 14

Students are new to weekly classes and have not necessarily learned to study on a regular basis yet. These students feel too old for "children's" activity and are beginning to want to be with other teens. These classes are meant to bring students into a more structured setting for learning including having beginning homework. Students will need to know how to read fairly well. They may just be beginning writing in this level. Parents can help these students by teaching them to organize their time and help them figure out what homework should be done. Parents should help students do this DAILY. Students should never be forced to do their school work, but reminders can certainly help them establish a studying habit. This level does well with passing off certification and earning rewards. This level is also frustrating because some students

will do no homework at all. Your job is to inspire them.

#### LEVEL 2 - typically ages 13 -15

These students are beginning to or already studying regularly. They are learning study skills and how to study for longer periods of time. Parents should follow through with project scholars DAILY and then move to WEEKLY. Students will need to read and write plenty in these classes and will have regular homework assigned for all classes. Mentors will find most of the students in these classes will be doing the homework, but some will still not. They may not be truly prepared for this level, but are in it because their friends are. Still frustrating, still need to inspire them.

#### LEVEL 3 - typically ages 15+

Students are beginning to study 6 -8-12 hours a day, 5-6 days a week, on their own because they want to. Parents do follow through periodically by reading papers, book reports, and attending presentations, etc as well as helping students plan and keep on track as needed. Scholar classes will help students continue to improve their rhetoric, thinking and calculating skills through reading, writing papers, and studying at home. In this level, the students typically will have followed through on their homework, but not always.

#### (3) Homework

Level 1 will have 1 hour a week or less homework per class. However, if the class is inspiring enough to the student, they will often work much more than that. Offer different levels of homework. Level 2 and 3 will have more.

Homework will typically consist of reading, writing or memorizing important documents or lines. Avoid “busy work,” rather include homework that helps the student learn to think or give them good things to think about.

#### (4) Accountability

Have some way to hold the students accountable. Compile a notebook, portfolio, have them teach a class, do a presentation, projects (or a final project), do a certification/complete the challenge, etc. Please consider ways to help the students follow through, but also remember you need to follow through too.

#### (5) Incentives

We want to inspire the students to study at home. It is often frustrating because some of the students don't do their homework. We don't give grades so there isn't that incentive. Rather we often use outside motivators such as certifications, awards and other incentives.

Ideally, all students would just want to study because it's the right thing to do and because it helps them prepare for their mission in life. That would be an intrinsic motivator. However, sometimes it really helps to provide an extrinsic motivator - something that comes from outside of the student, but motivates them to gain new habits. Extrinsic motivators are very effective when used for short term goals. And eventually the hope is that students find their internal motivation and don't need the extrinsic motivators as much, the older they get.

Certifications can be created so that when the student passes off certain tasks, they can earn small items that create one large whole. For example, students could earn stickers, and when all the stickers on the chart are filled in, they could earn the right to attend the party. Or in Key of Liberty, students earn a ribbon for each thing they pass off, and when they have finished everything, they earn a liberty key with the ribbons attached.

Because we want extrinsic motivators to be short-term, the awards shouldn't be "over the top." We can't create a precedent where students are earning huge awards, because then they'll come to expect that! A \$5-\$7 incentive per semester should be plenty.

Food may be used on occasion, but please do be aware of food allergies.

#### (6) The Gospel

Bring the gospel into the lesson! Encourage the students to find gospel connections by asking questions. Begin with a prayer in your class. Sing gospel songs as desired.

#### (7) Teach Leadership Principles & The Gospel

A main goal of our school is to teach the students that they have a mission in life. When they can begin to have a vision of what their life can become, they develop intrinsic motivation. It is wonderful to include leadership principles as much as possible in your classes, such as:

- Mission/Vision
- Goal setting/Habits
- Time Management
- Personal Organization
- Seven Habits
- Commitment
- etc.

#### (8) Teaching style

The LDS YM/YW program has some fabulous teaching training videos available online. <https://www.lds.org/youth/learn/learning-teaching-ideas/method-videos?lang=eng>

Great techniques:

- Keep lecturing short
- Allow students to give presentations
- Hold discussions, ask open-ended questions
- Get up and move if you need to mix things up
- Invite the students to act

#### TEACHING SUPPORT

We will hold about 3 mentor meetings per semester during lunch. This meeting is to help keep you inspired and have you bring us any questions or issues you may be facing. We don't want our s to get overwhelmed, please talk to us before something becomes a huge problem.

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

(1) Feel free to ask ANY student to follow the rules. If you see someone doing something dangerous or damaging property, stop them. If someone is causing the environment to feel negative, please pull them aside and chat with them. If a student is skipping class, bring them in.

Clearly we will allow for a little leeway, we don't need to be rules nazis. We would just like to maintain a respectful, uplifting learning environment in which the spirit can reside.

Also be aware of the following in your class.

Talking During Class (if it becomes a consistent problem, please take the students aside.)

Electronics (if it becomes a problem, take it until class ends.)

Respecting Other's Opinions (no one should ever disparage another's opinions, we want a safe sharing environment. Take the student aside to talk to them.)

(2) What should students call you?

Just to show respect to their mentors, students should call you Brother or Sister (last name), or Mrs/Mr. Introduce yourself the first week of class.

(3) Taking Roll

You'll need to take roll. If a student doesn't show up for three weeks, send please send a courtesy email to parents to let them know. Sometimes students don't communicate with their parents.

(4) Substitutes

If you will not be there, please get a substitute mentor (your team-mentor is the logical choice, parents can be asked as well.)

(5) Class Cancellations

Please don't cancel class. We only cancel class on a school-wide basis for extremely bad weather.

(6) Class Activities

Please don't schedule your class activity/rehearsals, etc during other classes. You will need to do those during some other time.

(7) Communications

Try to send out a weekly email to parents and students about what you are doing. This helps keep parents up to date and feel more involved. This is really hard to do as a mentor, but it does help you, the students AND parents to be more consistent.

Submit important dates to the secretary so she can keep us all updated.

(8) Google Drive & Other technology

Encourage the students to learn how to use Google Drive and other technology. Have

students submit written work to Google Drive. Papers will be much easier to review there.

PLEASE learn how to use Google Drive yourself. There are plenty of great tutorials online. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0ZvYRU1Y5Y&safe=active>

#### (9) Writing Mentors

Encourage parents of students in your classes to help you review papers. Parents who have attended the free LEMI training session should understand how to review papers and give helpful feedback.

### SUPPLIES & BUDGET

#### (1) Mentor Supply Boxes

We will have a basic supplies box in each room that will be put away at the end of the day. It will include items such as pens, pencils, gluesticks, scissors, white board markers & erasers. If the supplies start getting low, please let the facilities rep know. We will also have some other supplies in the supply cupboard. Also, if you need any other supplies that can be used or more than one class, let us know, we may be able to purchase it for the whole school (such as a white board, etc.)

#### (2) Copy Machine

We have a copy machine for mentor use only. If paper or toner is getting low, please let the facilities rep know. If you are making large amounts of copies (like 50+ per student), please include that in your budget and get the copies made elsewhere.

#### (3) Projector

We have a small projector for mentor use. Please test it before your class to make sure you have the correct cords for your computer.

#### (3) Mentor Curriculum / Books

If you have us pay for mentor curriculum or books for your use, we should get them back at the end of the semester for our library.

#### (4) Room Setup / Clean up

If you're the first one teaching one of the classes, please arrive 5-10 minutes early to set up.

Please tidy up room when done (or better yet, have students do it) - clear off tables, straighten chairs, clean up garbage, erase boards, return supplies to supply cabinet.

Please TURN OFF the heaters if you are the last class of the day.

#### (5) Class Planning

Please submit the following:

- \*Class Description (paragraph including description & amt of time for homework)
- \*Max/Min# of students you'd prefer in your class (typically 5 / 15)
- \*Class book list - what books are needed for the semester, and which will be

needed for the first two weeks. If you need a specific edition, note that as well. Approx costs will help as well.

\*Class outline (15 week outline, your accountability method and incentives.)

\*Class budget - (determine costs per student, including copies, incentives, and other supplies you may need. Mentors also get a credit of \$5 per semester per student, which needs to be included in the class budget.)

#### (6) Book ordering

Families will be given the option to order books on their own or to pay for the books needed when registering. The registrar will order all books for classes. Books for the first two weeks of class will be ordered ahead of time. After the first two weeks of class and the add/drop period ends, the rest of the books will be ordered.

#### (7) Class Budget Tracking

After the add/drop period, you'll receive a budget amount with a budget tracking sheet and envelope. You will keep track of your spending and save your receipts in the envelopes. We will have two reimbursement periods per semester: Oct 3 & Jan 9 for fall semester, and checks should be issued within 1 week.

If you don't have the money on hand to purchase items for your class, you can request the money up front. Then you'd purchase it, save the receipts and return them to us.

You don't have to spend the entire budget. Extra monies go back into the commonwealth fund. We do have a minimum class budget of \$25 per semester, some classes may not need to spend all of that.

#### (8) Mentor Credit

Mentors receive \$5 per student per mentor per semester tuition credit. It can only be applied to tuition, not the commonwealth fee. No refunds issued if you make more credit than you spend in tuition.

Mentors do NOT need to submit tuition payment until after the add/drop period, however you do need to register.