

Alleghany High School Attendance Mentorship Program

Program Name: Cougar Connect

Purpose: The Cougar Connect program aims to address chronic absenteeism by providing students with a supportive relationship with a designated staff member, or "Navigator," who will regularly check in, mentor, and guide them toward better attendance and academic success.

Program Structure:

1. Identification of Students:

- **Criteria:** Students with poor attendance records, defined as missing 10% or more of school days in a given term, will be flagged for participation in the program.
- **Data Transparency:** Utilize attendance data to identify these students. The data will be reviewed at the beginning of each term to ensure timely intervention.

2. Assignment of Navigators:

- **Navigator Role:** Each identified student will be paired with a staff member who will act as their Navigator. The Navigator's role is to establish a supportive relationship, provide guidance, and assist the student in overcoming barriers to regular attendance.
- **Consistency:** The same Navigator will remain with the student throughout the year to ensure consistency in support.

3. Check-In Process:

- **Weekly Check-Ins:** Navigators will conduct face-to-face or email check-ins with their assigned students on a weekly basis. These sessions will focus on the student's well-being, academic progress, and any issues they might be facing.
- **Monthly Meetings:** In addition to weekly check-ins, a more in-depth meeting will occur monthly, where Navigators will help students set goals, discuss challenges, and track progress.
- **Documentation:** Navigators will document each check-in and meeting, noting the student's attendance, issues discussed, and any actions agreed upon.

4. Goal Setting and Monitoring:

- **Individualized Goals:** During the initial meeting, Navigators will work with students to set personalized attendance and academic goals.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Goals will be reviewed during each check-in, with adjustments made as necessary to keep the student on track.

5. SEL Support and Resources:

- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Surveys:** Conduct SEL surveys at the beginning and end of the school year to assess students' emotional and social growth.
- **Resources:** Provide students with resources for time management, emotional support, and any additional needs that arise during their mentoring sessions.

6. Family Engagement:

- **Home Visits:** Where appropriate, Navigators may coordinate with school counselors to conduct home visits, ensuring that families are engaged and supportive of the student's attendance goals.
- **Communication:** Maintain regular communication with parents or guardians, updating them on their child's progress and enlisting their support.

7. Incentives and Recognition:

- **Incentives for Improvement:** Develop a system of rewards for students who show significant improvement in their attendance, such as recognition in school assemblies, certificates, or other positive reinforcements.
- **End-of-Year Celebration:** Host an event to celebrate the achievements of students in the program, acknowledging their hard work and progress.

8. Program Evaluation:

- **Data Analysis:** At the end of each term, analyze attendance and academic data to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.
- **Feedback:** Collect feedback from students, Navigators, and parents to make adjustments and improvements to the program.

9. Sustainability and Expansion:

- **Staff Training:** Provide ongoing training for staff members who act as Navigators, ensuring they have the tools and knowledge to support students effectively.
- **Community Partnerships:** Explore partnerships with local organizations to provide additional resources and support for students and their families.
- **Long-Term Commitment:** Ensure that the program is designed to be sustainable and continue beyond the current school year, with the goal of long-term improvement in student attendance and engagement.

Guidelines for Navigators:

1. **Build Trust:** Focus on creating a safe, supportive, and trusting relationship with the student.
2. **Be Consistent:** Make sure to meet with your assigned student every week without fail.
3. **Listen Actively:** Pay close attention to what the student shares, showing empathy and understanding.

4. **Encourage and Motivate:** Be positive and encourage students to set and achieve realistic goals.
5. **Maintain Confidentiality:** Respect the student's privacy and maintain confidentiality in all discussions.
6. **Communicate with Colleagues:** Work with other staff members, such as counselors and teachers, to provide comprehensive support.
7. **Stay Positive:** Focus on celebrating small wins and progress, keeping the student motivated.

This framework is designed to foster meaningful relationships between students and staff, with the goal of improving attendance and overall student success. It aligns with the broader goals of creating school connectedness and addressing chronic absenteeism effectively.