

COLEGIO BOLIVAR MENTORING PROGRAM

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is an adviser and supporter; somebody experienced, who guides a person starting in a new position. Mentors are open to sharing their life experiences in order to advance the personal and professional growth of a colleague. At CB, coaches play the role of mentors for new teachers with the support of principals, department heads, and/or grade level team leaders, depending on the need/situation. The Professional Learning Team (Director of Learning and coaches) does the follow up to the mentoring process.

Responsibilities of the Mentor:

1. Contact the mentee ASAP (ideally prior to arrival to Cali if they are from out of town). As best as possible, help them with the questions they may have as they prepare for the adventure on which they are about to embark.
2. Meet with the mentee on the first day of orientation week, and briefly every day of orientation week, to help them with the questions they may have. Although many things will be covered during orientation week and follow-up meetings, this information can be overwhelming and easy to forget.
3. Stay in regular contact with your mentee throughout the year and offer support in the specific areas already identified and listed in chronological order (help them anticipate things).

Expectations for the Mentee:

1. Seek help and/or be willing to accept it. Even though you have your own valuable background knowledge and previous experiences, being new to a school feels like being a first-year teacher all over again. Seek help. Your mentor/colleagues/coaches, counselor, and principal are willing to offer it to you.
2. Be honest about your feelings, frustrations, and fears. When your main interest is to portray an image of having everything “under control” all the time, it is hard for people to offer the help that you need to face the challenges of your new situation. However, do understand that there are things that your mentor does not control or cannot change. In that type of situation, please go see your principal.
3. Be humble. Acknowledging your own shortcomings is the first step towards identifying your needs and getting the help in a process of adapting to a new school culture.
4. Have an open mind. It is important for you to establish a balance between trusting your own instincts and experiences and being open to suggestions.
5. Be explicit. Avoid making assumptions or allowing people to assume things about you. For example, if you want advice, please say so.
6. Be flexible. Be willing to operate under a certain level of ambiguity. Your mentor won't be able to always anticipate things for you and changes can happen last minute.
7. Be respectful. This should go without saying, but people under the pressure of a stressful situation can forget about it in their interactions with peers. Show respect for the host country, its culture, and that of the school too.
8. Be considerate. Keep in mind that your mentor has many responsibilities of his/her own and that there are best times for you to ask questions or seek help. Agree on how and how often you will be communicating with your mentor.

The school thanks both mentors and mentees for the collaborative work that they do which fosters a healthy community environment and has a positive impact on learning.

Adapted from: Blue Sky Coaching and Mentoring (2011) & Reyes, M. (2010) What makes a good mentor. Joycompass Book 1(1), p. 1-6.