

**Policy and Procedure - Dealing with Difficult Behaviours**

**GenYZ Mentoring**

**Purpose**

## The GenYZ mentor and young person Code of Conduct clearly articulates expectations and behaviours of mentors and young people participating in our program.

This policy is intended to facilitate the management of unacceptable behaviours so as to minimise risks to people and property, and to protect the reputation of the GenYZ Mentoring program. It is in addition to behavioural requirements stipulated in other GenYZ policies or procedures including the Code of Conduct.

**Policy**

GenYZ Mentoring will not tolerate unacceptable behaviours on the part of mentors and/or young people while participating in the program.

Unacceptable behaviours include:

* physical violence
* verbal abuse and threats of violence
* disruptive behaviour (e.g. disturbing others, derailing activities)
* inappropriate language (e.g. loud, provocative, sexually suggestive, swearing)
* discriminatory behaviour (e.g. racist, sexist, homophobic).

Any unacceptable behaviour, as specified but not limited to the above, will result in a warning and/or disciplinary action including suspension or termination from participation in the program or particular program activities.

Failure to act within the program parameters and to adhere to the Code of Conduct will result in immediate action.

**Procedure**

Determine the nature of the behaviour and steps required to address the situation. Some unacceptable behaviour may be dealt with through disciplinary action (e.g. being consistently late for agreed mentoring times or inappropriate language), while other behaviours (such as breaking the law or endangering others) will require immediate termination from the GenYZ Mentoring program.

For behaviours that may be resolved through disciplinary action, adopt the appropriate Disciplinary Procedure below. Young people and mentors should continue to meet during this procedure. For unacceptable behaviour, follow the appropriate Termination Procedure.

**Mentor Disciplinary Procedure**

1. Arrange a face-to-face meeting with the mentor to outline and discuss the concerning behaviour.
2. Provide an opportunity for the mentor to respond.
3. Review the Code of Conduct and outline expectations for future behaviour.
4. Summarise meeting details in an email or letter to the mentor, requesting that the mentor responds if they disagree with the content. The communication should clearly outline the breach of the Code of Conduct, detail future actions and time frames and confirm a supervision schedule into the future.
5. Provide additional face-to-face supervision with the mentor (e.g. on a weekly/ fortnightly basis) to coach through current behaviours and ascertain additional training that may be beneficial to increasing the mentor’s skills, knowledge and capacity.
6. Set a date to review the mentor’s behaviour (e.g. two months after the initial discussion) to gauge change to behaviour and to determine future suitability.

**Young Person Disciplinary Procedure**

1. Arrange a face-to-face conversation with the young person to outline and discuss the unacceptable behaviour.
2. Provide an opportunity for the young person to respond.
3. Review the Code of Conduct and outline expectations for future behaviour.
4. Provide additional face-to-face support with the young person (e.g. on a weekly/fortnightly basis) to coach through current behaviours and ascertain additional supports and referral that may be beneficial to increasing the young person’s effective participation in the program.
5. Set a date to review the young person’s behaviour (e.g. two months after the initial discussion) to gauge change to behaviour and to determine future suitability.

**Mentor Termination Procedure**

1. Discuss the nature of behaviour with the direct line manager/supervisor and request their assistance in suspending the mentor from the program.
2. Seek legal advice if deemed necessary.
3. Decide with the line manager/supervisor on the best forum to speak with the mentor (i.e. face-to-face, phone conversation and who should be present). Arrange the meeting with the mentor and direct line manager/supervisor to outline and discuss the unacceptable behaviour.
4. Provide an opportunity for the mentor to respond.
5. Review the Code of Conduct with the mentor and outline where their behaviour has breached this code.
6. Advise the mentor that the nature of the breach makes him/her ineligible to continue participating in GenYZ Mentoring and that a match closure process will follow. Explain that this is due to the program’s obligations to participants, funding bodies, the school and wider community along with legal requirements and benchmarks in youth mentoring.
7. Outline the expectations of the mentor throughout the match closure process.
8. Summarise meeting details in a letter or email to the mentor, requesting advice that this has been read. Outline the area of the breach in Code of Conduct, GenYZ actions and the future match closure process.
9. Undertake the match closure process.
10. Record the procedure and outcomes in the mentor’s case file.

**Young Person Termination Procedure**

1. Discuss the nature of the behaviour with the direct line manager/supervisor and request their assistance in suspending the young person from the program.
2. Seek legal advice if deemed necessary.
3. Arrange a face-to-face meeting with the young person and direct line manager/supervisor (if required) to outline and discuss the unacceptable behaviour.
4. Provide an opportunity for the young person to respond.
5. Review the Young Person Code of Conduct with the young person and outline where their behaviour has breached this code.
6. Advise the young person that the nature of the breach makes him/her ineligible to continue participating in GenYZ Mentoring and that a match closure process will follow. Explain that this is due to the program’s obligations to participants, funding bodies, the school and wider community along with legal requirements and benchmarks in youth mentoring.
7. Outline the expectation of the young person throughout the match closure process.
8. Ensure the young person feels supported throughout the match closure process and make referrals to other support agencies if deemed necessary to ensure longer-term support for the young person.
9. Undertake the match closure process.
10. Record the procedure and outcomes in the young person’s case file.

**Tips for Dealing with Challenging Behaviours**

1. Stay calm and use an even tone of voice.
2. Make a calm, assertive statement about better ways to deal with the situation.
3. Do not take the behaviour personally (even if it is personal and directed at you), and give ‘I-messages’ using low-key language.
4. Focus on the issue at hand and do not become side-tracked.
5. Don’t argue or debate.
6. Consciously be aware of body language and ensure consistency between verbal and body language.
7. Employ strength-based conversation and solution-focused results.

**After-hours Support**

## The GenYZ Mentoring program provides both mentors and young people with an after-hours phone number to ensure the availability of additional support to all program participants.