



## THE YHS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM GUIDE FOR ALUM & COMMUNITY MEMBERS

### WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Welcome and thank you for your willingness to participate in York House School's Mentorship Program! Senior students are at a pivotal crossroads where they are exploring post-secondary opportunities and career pathways that will ultimately shape who they are in the future world of work. Having to face many complex decisions in high school, many students may find such decisions overwhelming or nearly impossible to make.

The YHS Mentorship Program gives students the opportunity to connect with alum and community members where they can gain valuable insight into post-secondary programs and career industries while developing lifelong relationships so that they can make informed decisions about their future. The knowledge, skills, and experiences of our alum and community around the world are essential to this program; this is an opportunity for you to make a lasting contribution to the success of our students as they explore their future careers!

Each year, and as a part of the Career-Life Connections curriculum at York House School, senior students will create a YHS Connect Profile and will reach out to potential mentors who are **“Willing to Help”** as a part of the YHS Mentorship Program. Their participation in the program will continue through their graduating year at YHS.

Mentors can remain involved in the program for as long as they wish and are able to engage in multiple mentorships over a period of time. Similarly, mentees who have been mentored once can opt to be mentored again if they wish.

There are many benefits to becoming a mentor, including:

- Reconnecting with the York House School Community
- Sharing your experiences and providing support for those in transitional stages in their career-life journeys
- Building mutually beneficial and rewarding relationships, both professionally and personally
- Developing or refining your leadership and communication skills
- Exploring professional networking opportunities and creating community contacts

### WHAT IS MENTORING?

The purpose of mentoring is to connect someone with considerable knowledge and experience (the mentor) with someone with less knowledge or experience who seeks guidance and/or support (the mentee).

By sharing personal stories and experiences, a mentor can play a key role in helping a mentee develop their confidence and leadership skills as they navigate and prepare for future career-life opportunities.

## **ROLE OF THE MENTOR**

As a mentor, your role is to share your experience and provide guidance based on your mentee's individual needs, interests, and questions. Mentors show a willingness to bring some and/or all the following to the mentor/mentee relationship:

- Share your work and/or post-secondary experiences
- Answer their career or industry-related questions
- Support in identifying their strengths, needs, and areas for growth
- Review their resume or conduct a mock or informal interview
- Offer resources, direct you to community contacts for additional support or direction
- Provide guidance and perspective, but not an answer

## **A MENTOR IS:**

- Patient and a good listener
- Willing to share their experience and knowledge
- Encouraging and supportive
- Able to build a friendly rapport yet maintain appropriate boundaries
- Someone to provide guidance and perspective, but not an answer

## **MENTORS DO NOT:**

- Share confidential information shared by the mentee
- Pass judgment or employ a judgmental approach
- Act as an authority figure or make decisions for the mentee
- Undermine the confidence of the mentee or give the mentee gifts
- Provide academic support or provide guidance on personal matters

## **HOW IS THE YHS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FACILITATED?**

Our YHS Connect platform allows us to extend the YHS Mentorship Program to a wider audience and overcome the barriers of time and location. Once matched together via YHS Connect, mentors and mentees can choose to come together via Zoom, Google Meet, FaceTime, by phone, or email, or in person.

## **HOW ARE MENTORS & MENTEES MATCHED?**

YHS Connect, is designed to present opportunities for mentoring, networking, and posting experiential opportunities for mentors and mentees alike. Once on the platform, you can choose to create your own profile or simply integrate with your LinkedIn account.

Creating your profile on [YHS Connect](#) is easy but it is important to keep information such as availability, work experience, and your location up to date. Remember to tick the boxes related to **“Mentoring”** and **“Offering Help”** sections of your profile.

Once your YHS Connect profile is complete, students will then be able to view mentors' profiles and send mentorship requests to mentors they feel suit their needs. If a student has requested you as a mentor, you should receive an automatic email from YHS Connect. At that point, you have the opportunity to either accept or decline the invitation.

## HOW ARE THE MENTEES PREPARED?

Students will be introduced to the concepts of mentorship and networking as a part of the Career-Life Connections coursework. Students will create a [YHS Connect](#) account; they will receive guidance on how to search for available mentors on the platform.

Our Career-Life Connection & Capstone Coordinator will review expectations around appropriate professional conduct, email etiquette etc with our students. They will also be given guidance on choosing a mentor that is the best fit for them based on their areas of their post-secondary exploration journey.

## HOW MANY MENTEES WILL I HAVE?

YHS Connect accommodates a maximum of two mentees per mentor at any one time. However, it is likely that most mentors will work with one mentee at a time on average. If you are already a mentor and feel you do not have the capacity to mentor more than one student you may simply “decline” subsequent requests.

If you decide to decline a mentoring request from a student, please ensure a follow-up message is sent informing them of the reason for your decision. For example, a mentee may be declined if:

- You do not feel you are able to adequately advise the mentee who has requested you for any reason (please explain why this is, to the student)
- You have already accepted another mentoring request(s) and do not have time to mentor more students

## WHAT IF I DON'T RECEIVE A REQUEST?

Depending on the ratio of mentees to mentors at a given time, individuals who indicate they are “*Willing to Help*” and “*Willing to Mentor*” may not be paired with a YHS student. It is also possible that some students in the YHS Mentorship Program may struggle to find a mentor that suits their needs initially. In these situations, we will endeavour to personally work with mentees and mentors to assist in finding a good match.

Occasionally the search for a match may be unsuccessful within a given cohort of students. However, we would encourage you to stay with the program as it is likely you will be matched with a mentee when a subsequent cohort of students joins the program.

## HOW DO I COMMUNICATE WITH MY MENTEE?

Initial mentee/mentor contact will be done through the YHS Connect platform. After that communication between mentors and mentees is flexible and may include a variety of methods including digital messages via YHS Connect, email, phone or text, Zoom, Google Meet, FaceTime, or in person.

Once students have made contact with potential mentors, the conversation frequency will vary and progress at a pace mutually agreed upon by the mentor and mentee.

## HOW LONG DOES MY COMMITMENT AS A MENTOR LAST?

Mentoring relationships are designed to be flexible for both the mentor and mentee; you can co-establish a relationship that works for both of you. Mentorship comes in all shapes and sizes. It can be a one-off or one-time conversation with a student, or it can be ongoing communication with several connection points over the course of an academic year. Of course, mentoring relationships may continue beyond this at the discretion of the mentee and mentor.

## RESOURCES

For additional information, please see the [Mentorship Frequently Asked Questions](#) or visit [our website](#).

## DISCLAIMER

We do not anticipate you will encounter any significant issues over the course of your mentorship, however, we acknowledge that issues can occasionally arise. The YHS Mentorship Program has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that everyone's experience is safe and successful but it cannot be held accountable should your mentoring relationship break down. In these circumstances, there will be no obligation to re-match mentors or mentees (although this is a possibility).

## MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES, CODE OF CONDUCT & CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

As a mentor participating in the YHS Mentorship Program, I agree to abide by the [Code of Conduct](#) for mentors as established by the Mentorship Program. I also agree to:

1. Commit to the mentorship duration agreed upon by me and my mentee.
2. Engage regularly — or as needed — throughout the mentorship and sustain the frequency of contact agreed upon between me and my mentee.
3. Notify my mentee in a timely manner of any changes or cancellations to any communications previously agreed upon.
4. Notify the Alum Office of any intention to withdraw from the YHS Mentorship Program.

## YHS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM CONTACTS

Ita Kane-Wilson, Associate Director, Alum Relations at [ikane-wilson@yorkhouse.ca](mailto:ikane-wilson@yorkhouse.ca) with questions related to:

- YHS Alum-to-Alum Mentorship Program information
- Use of YHS Connect (profile creation, technical concerns, etc.)
- Changing your contact information
- Changing or cancelling your involvement in the YHS Mentorship Program
- Participating in Alum events