

Guidance for phone or video mentoring sessions

Please find below some guidance for phone or video mentoring sessions during the period where face to face mentoring is not possible. Please remember that linking online with children and families is otherwise actively discouraged for safeguarding reasons. There is still great work that can be done in the mentoring relationship during these temporary arrangements and the child will benefit from the consistency and quality of contact with their mentor.

Once the coronavirus measures are lifted, physical mentoring sessions will return to normal, and phone or video session substitutes will cease. If for any reason you are not able to do phone or video sessions please let your Programme Manager know as soon as possible. This document is to be used alongside the weekly 'Mentoring From Home' ideas bulletin. Please do let us know which activities work well so that we can pass on recommendations to other mentors.

Safeguarding:

As always, safeguarding is our primary concern. Remember that your role is ICE: **Identify, Call and Evidence in your session report** any concerns.

After identifying a non-emergency concern, the procedure remains the same as before where you would need to **call your Programme Manager** on their work mobile in the first instance.

Please be aware that the Chance UK office is closed so your second option will be to alert one of Chance UK's Safeguarding Team: Ross Adams (07708 898 961); Jessica Easton (07941 194 120) or Denise Allen (07708 899 297).

If you are unable to contact Chance UK immediately, you need to either obtain advice from the NSPCC (0808 800 5000) or escalate your concerns with Children's Social Care of the borough the child lives in.

Practicalities and boundaries

As with face to face sessions, it's important to establish how these sessions will work.

- To make this easier for all involved, mentors and families can agree to split up their mentoring time (2-4 hours per week) into shorter calls. A session report should be completed each time a mentor has contact with their child.
- Timings - you might want to arrange a certain time on a certain day each week to have your sessions and agree roughly how long the session will be. Make sure the child and parent/carer is clear that phone/video contact with the child will not happen outside of arranged sessions.
- Agree with parent/carer in advance where the session will take place, and if the child is in a room by themselves (such as their bedroom) the door should be kept open throughout the call. Mentors can direct the child to check-in regularly with their carer.
- Make sure you communicate the expectations with the child too. For younger children, this may include staying on the phone, staying in an agreed place, that it is you who contacts them (always through the parent/carer and not the other way round), and that they should give the parent/carer the phone back once the session is complete.
- Phone handover - It may be that parents/carers are not happy for the children to take their phones - if so would carers be willing if the call was on speakerphone, with them present, so they can supervise? Try to establish what may be possible, rather than what is not.

WhatsApp and video call essentials

We know that WhatsApp is widely used by our families and mentors. As a social media platform, there are potential risks that will need to be avoided before using this for phone, video and other messaging. Mainly this can be 'indirect personal disclosure' through what is on view on these platforms.

- Your profile: a mentor's screen name, photo and status should show families a 'professional' and 'responsible' impression of you – imagine this is for a job interview! Photos should not feature other individuals; ideally just a simple head shot of you.
- Focus: you will need a private, quiet time and place free from interruption. Mentoring should remain a 1:1 relationship - make sure that those around you know you need absolute privacy and quiet during your session.
- Only take video calls at the agreed session time.
- No one else should ever feature in your video or phone calls to a child or family. If this happens, mention this in your session report.
- Background: your camera should remain in a fixed position with only you in view, do not walk around. Your surroundings reveal a huge amount about you, your life and situation, and 'you' are not the focus of the session or the mentoring, the child is! What you display could complicate or potentially damage the mentoring relationship unnecessarily. Please be very mindful of this.
- Some children may have access to their own mobile phone – even if this is the case, it is essential that all contact takes place through the parent/carer's phone, not the child's.
- If a child or parent/carer continues to attempt contact after the ending or completion of the relationship, please inform your Programme Manager or Chance UK as soon as possible.

Sharing photographs

Sending images during the arranged session time can help keep the visual contact going and could form the basis of a game or quiz. We would not recommend sending images of yourself but perhaps photos of completed activities / challenges. Perhaps swap portraits of each other? Arrange to send a photo of your dinner that day and they could send a photo of theirs?

Activities on the phone

Your child may be very happy to talk on the phone about how things are going in the same way that they do on sessions. Often, however, children may be shy on the phone. It might be easier in the first instance to agree that you both work on one an activity and use that as the content of the next call. Of course, if a child is happy talking organically that's fine too!

Session reports!

Please record all remote sessions on a session report. A box is available to tick which records that the session happened remotely. If photos were shared, please describe these very briefly (e.g. "sent photo of my cat drawing"). As in your face to face sessions please include an outline of what you did and the conversations that took place. If you made a video call, please make sure you state this at the start of your session report (e.g. "WhatsApp video session"). Please fill in all of the sections that you can.

? What to do if.....

You can't get through: We would recommend trying to call a maximum of 3 times. If you are unable to get through, please send a text explaining that you attempted to make contact and try to re-arrange the call. As with regular sessions, we recommend reminders to the parent/carer in advance whilst they adjust to this new mentoring routine.

You are contacted by the child from another number: Please only contact the child through the parent/carer's number. Please let the parent/carer and Programme Manager know if the child has tried to get in contact independently or through a different contact number.

Your child doesn't want to talk to you: Think of an activity from the 'ideas for remote mentoring session' document or weekly bulletin you can agree to work on so that next time you speak you will have something to say/do. If words are not flowing you may need to get creative! Ask if they can answer like a robot? One woof for yes, two woofs for no? Etc.

Quick guide to dealing with COVID-19 questions

- Children may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions. However, some will not. Either way, it is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them; make time for them. Let children talk about their thoughts and feelings. Remain calm and reassuring. Remind them that you and the adults in their lives should be there to keep them safe and healthy.
- Sometimes news and internet stories can sound scary. It might be helpful to focus on age-appropriate facts and what the child can do to keep themselves safe, such as washing their hands and keeping a 2m distance from people outside their household when they go outside. This disease is thought to be spread between people who are in close contact with one another—when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It can be spread when you touch an infected surface or object, which is why it is so important to protect yourself. It is also why we have had to stop mentoring sessions and leaving the house for now, to ensure everyone isn't spreading it around.
- Programme Managers have been compiling resources that explain coronavirus to children so do ask for something to be sent across if needed. As ever, detailed session reports will help Programme Managers support you best, and escalate any concerns as soon as possible.

Thank you in advance for your flexibility and perseverance in making mentoring continue during this difficult time. Chance UK mentors are true heroes and we are so grateful for your hard work!

