



2020-2021 Virtual Mentoring Program

Vision: 100% Student Achievement

Mission: Every child has someone who cares

Program Goals:

- Support a child's social and emotional development
- Support academic gains
- Improve school involvement and attendance
- Provide an exceptional experience for Lunch Pals and their students

How does Lunch Pals work?

Lunch Pals meet virtually with their student for 30 minutes once a week, during the student's lunch break.

Is Lunch Pals face-to-face or virtual?

Lunch Pals will be virtual for the balance of this school year. Once Covid is all clear, Lunch Pals will have several options - to can continue to meet virtually, to mostly meet virtually and occasionally meet at school, or meet at your student's school face-to-face.

Do I have to live in Pinellas County Florida to be a Lunch Pal?

No – with virtual mentoring you can be a Lunch Pal from anywhere. All the students are in Pinellas County Schools, but you can be anywhere.

Can I join Lunch Pals now, since school has started?

Yes – you can join anytime during the school year. We have many students waiting for you.

What are the expectations for how long I will be a Lunch Pal?

Lunch Pals are committed to meet with their students virtually (or face-to-face when permitted) on the scheduled day and time each week from the time they start until the end of the school year.

Can I be a Lunch Pal with my student for more than one year?

Yes – it is great for the students. Many Lunch Pals follow their student from grade to grade.

Ron Diner, with Raymond James, is a Lunch Pal with a student who is going into eighth grade. He started having lunch with his student in second grade.

When Ron asked his mentee what he likes about having lunch together, he said “I just like to hang out with you.”

What are the benefits of being a Lunch Pal?

Mentoring can be life changing for both the Lunch Pal and the student.

Your willingness to invest time with a child, who may be facing social, economic, family and/or academic challenges in their life will have a great impact. By being accessible and open to listening and not judging, you will create an important connection, allowing your student to be themselves. Building a trusting relationship takes time and commitment, but it is well worth the effort.

You are making a difference through a lasting and meaningful contribution of your time, and it's fun! Lunch Pals have told us it has changed their lives.

Who are the students, and how are they identified?

Each student is identified by school personnel as a child who could benefit from a mentoring relationship. Some students are facing social, economic, family and/or academic challenges, or are just at a point in their lives where they will especially benefit from an additional positive and encouraging adult who spends time with them.

Can I choose the school where I will be a Lunch Pal?

Lunch Pals is focused on the children who need us most and the schools that need us most. You can choose the school where you would like to be a Lunch Pal, or we can partner you with a child at one of our neediest schools.

Can I meet with my student outside of lunch?

In most cases - no. Lunch Pals only meet with students when school is in session at the designated date and time. There is no sharing of personal information and no contact with your student - in person, by phone, on social media, by text or email. There is no contact with the parent or guardian of the student. All virtual Lunch Pals sessions are monitored by a school employee. This is all designed to protect everyone involved.

In some cases, where an organization has many staff as Lunch Pals at the same school, it is possible to coordinate a field trip to the organization's office. This must be arranged with the school to determine there are no conflicts with testing, etc., and if adequate staff can be available to accompany the visit. The organization would have to underwrite the costs of transportation, etc.

What is the process for getting started?

All Lunch Pal applicants complete an online volunteer registration form and attend a 90-minute Mentor Workshop Webinar

- [Register Here](#) to attend a Mentor Workshop Webinar and complete the volunteer registration form, which is designed to help assure the safety for everyone.

Once attendance at the workshop is completed and the volunteer registration is reviewed, the Family and Community Liaison at the designated school will pair you with a student and set a mutually agreed upon day of the week and time for the student and mentor to meet virtually. The liaison will work with you to set up the virtual procedures.

What do I talk about with my student? How do I get ideas for each session?

We have created Weekly Activities with suggestions for what to talk about. You can find the Weekly Activities at lunchpals.org. In addition, you will receive a mentor strategies handbook and there are additional [resources](#) on the PCSB website.

However, what you talk about is not as important as your commitment to be present, and to be a good listener. The most important thing that you can do is show up each week.

Who will contact me if the student is unavailable for our scheduled session? What if I cannot make my scheduled virtual Lunch Pals session?

The family & community liaison at your school will be your main contact and is responsible for keeping you up to date. If your student is unavailable, you will be contacted the morning of your scheduled session, and, if possible, a new day and time can be arranged.

If you cannot make it for your scheduled session, please contact the Family & Community Liaison. Perhaps it can be rescheduled. It is understood that there may be a week when you cannot make it.

What kind of feedback and results will I receive?

Lunch Pals will receive occasional program updates in the Lunch Pals newsletter, and an end-of-the-year-report.

Do parents or guardians know their students have a Lunch Pal?

Parents are informed by school personnel to assure they are in favor of their student having this opportunity.

What if I have additional questions?

We are here to help. Please let us know how we can help [HERE](#)



Office of Strategic Partnerships

Lunchpals.org