

The aim of the **Pragati Educational Foundation** is to support children with inadequate means but proven scholastic record and good potential to enable them to receive education commensurate with their potential and eventually become self-reliant individuals. Accordingly, Pragati scholarship holders (referred to here as **Scholars**) are selected taking into account their performance and family background. Pragati scholars are therefore reasonably capable in the academic sense but lack exposure, which makes them less confident and self-assured than their friends from economically stronger backgrounds. They also lack the kind of guidance and motivational support they require from time to time to achieve results commensurate with their potential.

The Pragati Educational Support program is based on the belief that for achieving its objectives, it has to go beyond financial support and provide its scholars support by way of mentoring as well as career guidance.

Pragati Mentoring Program

The aim of the "**MENTOR**" is to assist the **Scholar** in deriving as much benefit as possible from our educational support program. It is important that the Mentor does not assume or appear to assume the role of a parent / guardian or even that of the formal teacher. Rather the mentor supplements the scholar's existing support structure to achieve this objective. While the Mentor would generally interact with the scholar there maybe times when it may be necessary for the Mentor to interact with the family or school of the scholar for specific information.

The Role of the Mentor

1. To assist the scholar in setting ambitious yet realistic academic targets for the year, taking into account earlier performance and potential.
2. To monitor and discuss the academic performance of the scholar on a continuous basis in relation to his / her targets and help the scholar in meeting the targets.
3. To discuss with the scholar and where necessary, with teacher / parent, reasons for below par performance and identify the steps required to raise performance.
4. To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the scholar and institute steps along with the scholar, teacher / parent to gradually build on the strengths and minimize/ eliminate these weaknesses.

5. To help the scholar in building self-assurance and grace. To help the scholar feel generally at ease and enable him / her to communicate fluently and spontaneously in English. Make it a point to communicate with the children ONLY in English.
6. To help the scholar feel confident that he / she can achieve his / her objectives through focused hard work and practical approach to situations. Inspire by sharing information, incidents and experiences.
7. To be a source of encouragement to the scholar to strive for steady improvement in performance. While dealing with the scholar with sensitivity and affection in trying to raise the standards, it is also necessary to handle him / her with firmness, when required - for example if the scholar is found wanting in effort in spite of adequate encouragement and motivation, he / she may have to be reminded that the continuation of this scholarship is contingent upon their meeting Pragati's academic norms.
8. To see that the scholar pursues his / her extra-curricular interests to the extent possible, without getting distracted from his / her academic objectives.
9. To understand the problems of the scholar, both spoken and unspoken and discuss with the teacher / guardian steps to overcome these problems.
10. To assist in evolving career options for the scholar keeping in view the resource requirements, and helping the scholar in making the necessary preparations (entrance test, language training etc.).
11. To assist the scholar in taking advantage of the facilities / programs offered by Pragati's associate organizations such as FFE, Rotary etc.
12. To carry out bi-annual evaluation of scholar's continued eligibility for scholarship renewal on considerations of both academic performance and financial circumstances and forward recommendation to Pragati for disbursement of scholarship.
13. To report back to Pragati, the scholars progress in academics and other areas and seek resources where necessary for particular needs of the scholar.
14. To encourage the scholar to contribute to Pragati's activities / events, journals, etc as an avenue for self-development.
15. To act as an administrative contact between Pragati and the scholar for transfer of information / documents e.g. marksheets, certificates, cheques to the scholar, event information etc.

16. To continue to keep contact with the scholar after he / she has left the Pragati program and to encourage the scholar to support Pragati's cause in whatever way he / she can.

Periodicity of Contact

It is recommended that the mentor meet the scholar in person at least once a month but in any case no less than once in two months. There should also be occasional contact over the phone. The scholar should have access to his / her mentor to seek advice / support as when he / she feels the need.

The Mentoring Session

During the mentoring session,

- Make sure that the language of communication is **English**.
- Stress the need for punctuality, discipline, honoring commitments etc.
- Do not show too much interest in family related issues, problems etc. – try to bring focus back to academics.
- Make the sessions as interesting as possible through camaraderie, humor etc.

Session Structure and Duration

A typical mentoring session may be planned for 3 hours to cover eight students.

This session would be divided into two parts:

- a) The “**Common time**” where issues of general interest are covered. The duration of this part would be 1 hour. This is full group activity.
- b) The “**Individual time**” with the scholars. The duration of this part would be 2 hours - spending 15 minutes with each scholar. **These interactions would be strictly private between the mentor and the scholar.**

Session Coverage

In the “**Common time**” the Mentor would

1. Make each child speak or read something of common interest and discuss with the others in the group.
2. Share interesting thoughts – they could be inspiring stories, illuminating anecdotes, confidence building messages, topical subjects
3. Specifically recognize the achievements of particular scholars if any – for motivation and emulation (these achievements can be studies, arts, sports etc.
4. Share general information of interest such as upcoming events, last dates for say FFE application forms, details required for completing these forms etc.

In the “**Individual time**”, the Mentor would

1. Collect marksheets, certificates etc. received by the scholar since previous mentoring session. These along with the “targets” set by the scholar would form the primary basis for the interaction.
2. Interact with the scholar on “how to move towards the targets”. The Mentor should not try to directly provide prescriptions but rather to engage the scholar’s mind with the idea that meeting targets is very important and to help the scholar figure its own strategy to move forward.
3. Interact in a structured manner so as to elicit the information sought in the Mentoring Record.
4. Collect receipts for any payments made by the scholar towards his / her education.
5. Handover cheques from Pragati, if any.
6. Update address, telephone number and other information of the scholar

The above paragraphs define the spirit and the basic mechanics of the mentoring process. Each mentor could modify it marginally to suit his or her personal style and on-ground conditions.



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