

## Instructional Guidelines for MLC's New "Bridge Program"

Given limited session frequency, particularly for students who struggle with TMOSS and motivation, accountability can be tricky. We know that students do best with consistent check-ins and real-time problem-solving through difficulties. In our efforts to overcome the constraint of limited face-time with students, we're expanding our traditional in-person tutoring model to include remote, recurring progress checks (phone, email, text messaging, etc.) and tutoring (phone, email, video chat, etc.). The progress checks and remote tutoring will support in-person tutoring, NOT replace it. The new extended tutoring service will be called the **MLC Bridge Program (BP)**, providing a bridge to help students achieve their goals, stay accountable to the tutoring process, and maximize their learning.

In order to create a quality experience for our students, we have created a structure and standards for tutors to use in the Bridge Program (BP). Please read this document thoroughly and sign it at the end, if you wish to be considered for Bridge Program tutoring.

The Bridge Program is ideal for:

- Students who struggle with time management and organization skills
- Students who need a greater frequency of tutor meetings or contact, to help facilitate goal achievement
- Parents who wish to increase the tutor's role, to enhance accountability measures in service of the student's academic goals
- Students and parents who are busy and would benefit from alternate means, in addition to one-to-one tutoring, for supporting the student's learning and skill development

### Program Structure: How it Works

1. New and current MLC families have the opportunity to opt into this service as an add-on to their child's regular in-person tutoring. The BP is only offered as an addition to our face-to-face tutoring, not a replacement.
2. Goals and expectations will be discussed at the Initial Consultation (for new families), so that parents can explicitly state and describe their wishes for the use of these services. For families wishing to start the BP after they have worked with us for a while, tutors are to discuss the goals and expectations directly with the family, to confirm their priorities. They should then outline the goals and expectations and email them to the parent and MLC management for confirmation. A clear delineation of roles among parent, student, and tutor is essential for the BP to work effectively.
3. Depending on the extent of tutor involvement desired, parents may need to provide the tutor with passwords or entry codes to the student's online grade and assignment tracking website (such as School Loop or Infinite Campus) and permission to monitor these sites.
4. Communications regarding the child's progress will be emailed via CenterTrac, using the new BP "Checkpoint" template you will find in the Client Note field, upon selecting "Checkpoint" on CT. BP tutors will submit weekly summary notes of the student's accomplishments, tasks to-do, and any issues needing further attention or intervention. They will also send targeted email communications to address specific issues of concern, if needed.
5. If a tutor encounters barriers in gathering complete information (from the student or the school), the tutor must notify the parent(s). At that point, the parent may choose to intervene and/or request additional time from the tutor for additional investigation and communications. The level of tutor involvement in trouble-shooting or fact finding is determined by the parent's approval for additional time and communications needed. For tutor meetings with school professionals (via phone or in-person), parents will be charged the normal tutoring rate, and the tutor will be paid his/her normal session rate (pre-approval needed from parent, via email).

## Tutor Compensation

- Checkpoints\*
  - **Level A** package : 4 – 8 checkpoints per month
    - **Tutor is paid for one full 50-minute session per month (this includes your time spent for 4 – 8 checkpoints conducted in the course of the month—amounting to one to two checkpoints *per week* for the student)**
  - **Level B** package: 9 – 15 checkpoints per month
    - **Tutor will be paid for two full sessions (100 minutes) per month (this includes your time spent for 9 – 15 checkpoints conducted in the course of the month—amounting to approximately 3 - 4 checkpoints *per week* for the student)**
- Remote Tutoring sessions (video-conferencing, email, phone)
  - Pro-rated 1/5 (20%) of single session compensation per 10 minute increment

\*“Checkpoints” are interactions/exchanges via text, email, IM, or phone. A check-in may require brief back-and-forth replies between tutor and student, as well as a look at the student’s online grade-tracking system. Tutors are expected to document and submit checkpoint sessions in CT within the week of the checkpoints (all checkpoints for the week are submitted in one CT note, for that week). We encourage tutors to start the checkpoint note for the first checkpoint of the week, then save it in CT with an administrative note reading “Checkpoint notes in progress.” Weekly notes will be approved by management when this administrative note is removed (once you have completed your notes for that week, you can delete it, and we will approve the note). A date must be listed for each checkpoint submitted. Keep in mind that there should be at least one to two checkpoints per week for Level A and three to four checkpoints per week documented for Level B (see above).

## Logistics

### How to: “Checkpoints”—a typical session

1. Before Checkpoints begin: Make sure goals/expectations are clearly communicated (specific schedule, contact method, what will be checked, visual inspections)
2. Check student’s work/follow-up on agreements made. Hold student accountable through visual checks (webcam, email), when possible. The student should *SHOW YOU*, not *tell you* when something is done. If visual verification is not possible, ask student to describe details of their work.
3. Ask student to verbally summarize checkpoint accomplishments and challenges.
4. Trouble-shoot, adjust, problem-solve as needed.
5. Name and confirm tasks to be done for next session (student must write down tasks).
6. Confirm next meeting time.
7. After each Checkpoint: Tutor fills in Checkpoint notes in CT, saving the notes for the week and submitting the package of Checkpoint notes at the end of the week. Note in “Progress Notes” section of checklist if student is not prepared or available at the agreed upon time, for the checkpoint. Select 0 minutes for the weekly checkpoints (you will bill for your time at the end of the month).
8. At the end of the month, you will submit the *time* in CT for that month’s checkpoints (50 minutes for Level A package and 100 minutes for Level B, as approved initially by the parents). Select Rate N. No summary notes are required for the BP monthly time submission in CT .

### How to: “Remote Tutoring”—a typical session

- Before Remote tutoring begins: Make sure goals/expectations are clearly communicated (schedule, contact method, tools prepared - webcam, video chat, whiteboard, etc., and subjects to be covered). Also, parents must provide written approval (email is fine) for the maximum time to be allotted for the remote tutoring session.
- Set brief, measurable targets (goals) for the session.
- Conduct the session, using extra methods to check student understanding and clarify areas of confusion. Assess efficacy of each session’s teaching—note whether goals have been met for the session and whether any additional follow-up work will be required by the student or you.
- Confirm meeting time of next session.
- After each session: Tutor fills in CT notes, same as a standard in-person session (select Rate N); enter notes in 10-minute increments.
- For Remote Tutoring no-shows (barring illness or family emergency), the tutor may bill for the scheduled session duration.

**For Checkpoints and Remote Tutoring:**

- Try to problem-solve with the student when there are issues of concern. Send alert emails if issues come up that need immediate attention, intervention, or parent support. Do NOT wait for problems to snowball; they must be addressed openly and proactively, to ensure resolution and parent satisfaction.
- Technical difficulties may occasionally occur. Flexibility may be needed. In the event of tech problems, use multiple methods to reach the parent/student and try to remedy the situation. Checkpoints or remote tutoring may need to be rescheduled, if technical difficulties prevent the session. Document any such issues in your CT notes and via email to the parent as soon as possible.

**Documentation Details**

**“Checkpoints” (Progress Checks)**

- For weekly checkpoints: fill out CT Checkpoint notes within 24-48 hrs of every checkpoint (we recommend doing it the same day as the checkpoint). Select “Checkpoints – weekly” from the session type drop-down menu in CT. Select “0” minutes for the *weekly* notes. The weekly notes are critical communications that let parents know how the student is progressing.
- For monthly billing: Select “Checkpoints –monthly” from the session type drop-down menu in CT for these notes. Enter monthly notes *with time only* into CT by the last day of each month, tracking progress for the month, to be billed for all of the checkpoints you have done in the month (select “50 minutes” for 4-8 checkpoints per week and “100 minutes” for 9-15 checkpoints per week). You do not need to write text in the client note session for the monthly time submission, since you will have submitted thorough session notes each week delineating BP progress.
- Tutor should spend approximately 10-15 minutes per week on Checkpoints (for 4-8 checkpoints; double this for 9-15 checkpoints per week); this includes the CT entry. Notify MLC management upfront, if you’re spending more time than this.

Here is the CenterTrac template format which will appear when you select “Checkpoints -- weekly” in the drop-down field on CT:

Checkpoint Dates:
Recurring Tasks: (measurable regular tasks that the student completed)
Project Tasks: (measurable tasks that the student completed, for a project).
Grade check from school website:
Assignment follow-up (list any assignments that are missing or due):
Progress notes: (concerns, issues, accomplishments):

## Tutor Role and Responsibilities

At MLC, we are known for our high, exacting standards. Tutors who have impeccable time management and organization skills are an excellent fit for the BP. We want to stress how important it is for tutors involved with the BP to be timely and consistent, should they decide to add the BP to their work. Tutors who cannot role model first-rate time management and organization skills cannot teach them effectively to students. Please consider this before signing on with the BP.

Progress checks must be done on a consistent, timely, and scheduled basis. Communications (via CT and email) are to be completed within 24-48 hours of the interactions. We suggest that you input notes for each checkpoint **on the same day you conduct it**, so that you do not struggle to recall or record the details of each checkpoint. Communications written after the fact are often slow-to-recall, sparse, and inadequate. Checkpoints done in the same week and saved for adding more can be logged with an administrative note reading "Checkpoint notes in progress". MLC managers will approve your note for the week once you remove that administrative note.

The tutor must communicate to parents if there are any issues of concern (i.e. student responsiveness, difficulty tracking grades or getting real-time progress reports from online school systems/teacher); any difficulty/obstacles meeting goals or expectations of the family must be communicated openly and immediately. ***Copy Ali on these communications. Ask for help from the management team (in problem-solving through issues) if you need it.***

Although parents, tutor, and teachers can offer support, the goal is to enable the student to eventually function without significant dependence on their support "team". Students must also know that they are primarily responsible for doing the work that will help them reach their goals.

## Tutor ethics and professionalism

Remote tutoring requires the utmost professionalism. Video, chat, phone and text communications can be recorded, tracked, and revisited easily. Tutors should conduct themselves via video, web, and phone interactions as if the parent were present with the student during all interactions. The student and his/her academic needs are to be the TOTAL focus of the tutor. Meyers Learning Center has a zero tolerance policy for any inappropriate conduct in tutors' interactions with students; this is true for in-person sessions and all communications or interactions conducted remotely with students.

## Technology

Remote tutoring works well with the following high-speed browsers which can be downloaded for free: Firefox, Chrome, Safari, Internet Explorer. If your computer system is able to run the latest version of these browsers, we encourage you to upgrade your browser.

## Tools and Equipment

Parents are required to purchase all of their own equipment, for which we will provide recommendations upon request. Tutors use their own equipment. Adam can provide limited tech support or guidance to tutors in using technology tools, if needed. Here are some recommendations for tools or equipment.

- Phone
- Video chat (Recommend Skype)
  - Web cam: For PC - Logitech 720p Webcam Pro 9000.
  - For Mac - Logitech QuickCam Vision Pro
  - Headset: Logitech ClearChat Comfort USB Headset

- Email
- Text messaging
- Instant messaging (Recommend Yahoo, Google, and Skype)
- Google documents (great for project management, calendaring, reminders, planning, assignment tracking): docs.google.com
- Geometer's sketchpad: <http://www.dynamicgeometry.com/>
- White Board

## Parent Role

1. As always, tutoring works best with clear, collaborative communications. We ask that parents be as responsive and timely in communications with MLC and the tutor as possible. We strive to do the same. If there is ever a concern about the tutoring or the tutor's responsiveness, we have asked the parent to let the tutor or MLC management know immediately.
2. Many parents express interest in utilizing the Bridge Program to help reduce their involvement with the student's academic functioning. Tutors can assume this role, if granted access to the appropriate information and open communications with the student and parents. The tutor's time may vary, depending on the level of parent involvement, and tutors will bill and be compensated for their time as needed. We have asked that parents who wish to cap/limit the tutor's additional time to communicate that in writing to the tutor and MLC management. Expectations for the scope of work should be adjusted to the time granted for tutoring.
3. Parent support and intervention may be needed in contacting teachers or school officials to provide permission for the tutor to communicate with school professionals. Tutors need to communicate their needs for working effectively with the student to the parents.
4. Parent participation will be required for students who have difficulty following through on agreements or plans made with the tutor. Tutors can provide structure and accountability for students, but tutors cannot and will not complete the work for them. Ultimately, a student's success results from his or her personal level of motivation, effort, and dedication; tutors can facilitate the process by making students and parents aware of this fact.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read and understood the structure and process of the Bridge Program at Meyers Learning Center. I agree to meet the expectations detailed in the document, as designated for a tutor with MLC in this role.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor Name