

Policies and Procedures of The Denim Beret Mentoring Program

Last updated: 3/18

Welcome to *The Denim Beret!* Below is some information you will need as I begin working with your student(s) this year. Please contact me if you have any questions.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Teacher: Cheri Blomquist

Office hours: Monday-Friday; closed Saturdays, Sundays, and major holidays

Email: cblomquist@denimberet.com

Phone: (720) 999-1658 (cell)

MOUNTAIN TIME ZONE

NOTE: All stated times in my communications will be in Mountain time to prevent me from making calculation mistakes. Please know your time difference, and account for it in your calendar when we set up video chats or phone calls.

HOW MENTORING WORKS: Once you have registered for The Denim Beret, your student will soon receive a welcome email and a student version of this document. After that point your student is free to email me a draft when ready, along with a note that describes the project and the kind of guidance desired. I will then evaluate the draft and email it back to the student with my comments and scored rubric. My comments and rubric will be tailored to meet the student's skill level as closely as possible.

If I recommend a revision, you may choose to have your student revise the draft and send it to me for a second evaluation, or you may choose to use my evaluation to complete the revision with your student. Please note that I consider revision an extremely important part of the writing process and may recommend several revised drafts. Whether or not you complete them with me, however, is always up to you.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS: If you are certain that your student will only work with me on one short project, however, you are not required to use Google services. Otherwise, your student will need to have a dependable computer, microphone, and webcam. Your student will also need a Google account and Gmail address. This account and address should be ones to which your student has access but that you can also access. This is to help ensure internet safety and transparency with The Denim Beret. Students will use Google apps to work through projects with me, including Gmail, Drive, Hangout, and Classroom (video chat).

The link for opening a Google account and Gmail address is:

<https://accounts.google.com/signup?hl=en>

Please note: Instruction cannot begin until this account is ready and test emails have been exchanged.

TEACHER-STUDENT CONTACT POLICY: I will do my best to ensure that parents are aware of all teacher-student interaction. If a student communicates with me through his or her own email address, I will always copy the parent in my reply, unless it is very brief and minor (such as for a quick technical question). Any live communication must be conducted only in the presence of a parent or adult guardian. This does not mean the parent must be sitting next to the student throughout the call, but the parent does need to be present in a room nearby. If this is not possible at the time of the appointment, I will need to reschedule.

If you discover that I have forgotten to follow the teacher-student contact policy as outlined above, *please* call my attention to it. Safety and transparency are important components of all online instruction with minors, just as they are in physical settings. I will not overlook this safety rule purposely and need to know when it happens.

STUDENT DEADLINES: Students in the mentoring program are self-paced and will therefore not be given deadlines. I do, however, appreciate regular communication so that I know what to expect. For example, if I evaluate a rough draft and recommend a revision, I like to know whether the student intends to work on that revision with me or with a parent. If I don't receive this information, I will follow up with you.

RESPONSE TIME: Please allow three full business days for the return of evaluated projects. If I don't respond within the expected time frame, please send me an email reminder, in case your email was accidentally overlooked or deleted. Projects of three pages or more may require a longer response time. In such cases I will let your student know when to expect the evaluation.

TIME-SENSITIVE PROJECTS: Sometimes mentoring students come to me for help on projects that are due to other teachers by a certain date. If you are under a tighter deadline than my response window (see "Response Time" above), let me know. In such cases I will try to give your student's project a high priority and return it faster. Because I can't guarantee an earlier response, however, it is important that you plan ahead as much as possible.

WHAT TO DO IF I DON'T RESPOND TO YOUR EMAILS: When you enroll in *The Denim Beret*, you are supporting a home microbusiness with all the limitations that may entail. It is important, therefore, that you understand that I will never ignore your emails or phone calls. If I don't respond to you in a timely manner, please assume that something went wrong in cyberspace and try again.

Because I do not employ a staff and realize that something may suddenly happen to me or my technical capabilities, I am providing you with a secondary email address: etblomquist@gmail.com. This address should be used only if I do not respond to you after you have tried to email and call me several times.

GRADING POLICY: I don't use traditional letter grades for mentoring. Because I prefer to keep parents in control of final grades and because I approach writing as an art, not an academic exercise, I focus on mastery and growth. My grading key (below) reflects this philosophy. Please don't try to translate this key into letter grades, because they don't

necessarily compute that way. For example, an “GM” grade is not just another way of saying “A.” I approach your student's work with a different mindset from when I use letter grades.

GM = goal mastery

AM = almost-there mastery

MM = mid-level mastery

LM = low-level mastery

NP = skill not shown

N/A = not applicable

THE PARENT'S ROLE IN THE LEARNING PROCESS: Although I may be your student's writing mentor, your support is important. As your student works with me, one of the best ways you can assist is to help your student understand and apply my evaluations to their revisions. Another important way you can help is to drop me notes on occasion to let me know how your student is doing. I have learned that many students will not ask for help or express feelings of stress or confusion, even if I ask them directly for their thoughts. With that in mind, although I do my best to ensure student success, I trust the parent/guardian to alert me if anything is wrong.

PRIVACY POLICY: Whenever I receive positive feedback, I like to quote it on my website. I also like to use student work as models on occasion. If at some point I want to use any quotes or models from you or your student, I will always ask you for permission to do this. I also do not sell or give student or parent information to third parties.

PAYMENT POLICY: When a student sends me a draft to evaluate, I will send the parent/guardian an invoice. This will need to be paid within eight days. Payment options include Paypal and personal checks (preferred).

REFUND POLICY: Refunds are available but will be given only for unused payments.

LATE PAYMENT POLICY: When you enroll with The Denim Beret, you are supporting a home micro-business. I am unable to pursue late or non-payments beyond emails and phone calls. For the sake of simplicity, I also do not charge late fees. When a payment is late, I will send the parent/guardian a follow-up email, continuing to work with the student in the meantime. If I don't receive payment promptly after this reminder, I may have to discontinue my services. Although I will never discuss finances with your student, this will quickly become awkward. Please prevent an unpleasant situation by paying promptly.

NON-CORRESPONDENCE POLICY: In the event that a family drops the mentoring program without notifying me, I will follow this procedure:

- 1) If a student does not respond within a few days to an email to which I am expecting a reply, I will send a follow-up email. Parents will always be copied on these emails.
- 2) If I do not receive a response to the follow-up email within a few days, I will place the student on “inactive status” and cease to follow up. The student may return to mentoring when he or she is ready, as long as I have an opening and the previous invoice has been paid.