



**SIES School of Learning and Leadership Development (SISSLDD)**

**TRAINING NOTE (007/2026-27)**

**on**

**Role of a Teacher Outside the Classroom is Equally Important as that Inside the Classroom**

**May 2026**

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## **Backdrop**

People often believe that classroom teaching is the only point of connection between a teacher and students. However, this is not entirely true in the real sense of the term. Research indicates that the quality of the “informal relationship” a teacher develops with students outside the classroom is often more influential than the “formal relationship” inside the classroom in shaping their future lives.

There is no denying that the formal relationship within the classroom, through transfer of knowledge, sharing of ideas, debates, activities, observations, questioning, and even arguments among peers and teachers, helps in creating more informed individuals. Such interactions contribute significantly to intellectual growth and academic development.

On the other hand, the informal relationship outside the classroom is subtler and more human in nature. It contributes immensely to the character formation of students. While the formal relationship is often “transaction-oriented” and driven by learning outcomes, the informal relationship is rooted in empathy, emotional bonding, trust, and friendly guidance that supports the “holistic developmental needs” of students.

Therefore, it is often observed that the better the informal relationship between teachers and students, the stronger the emotional bonding and the greater the developmental orientation of students. A teacher should thus consciously strive to develop positive emotional connections with students outside the classroom in addition to maintaining a formal academic relationship within the classroom, which is more regulatory and duty-bound in nature.

## **Major Roles of Teachers Outside the Classroom:**

**Relationship with Students Outside the Classroom:** A teacher is, for all practical purposes, a “Guru” to students. Therefore, the teacher’s integrity, character, behaviour, and moral standards, even outside the classroom, are extremely important. Students often see their teachers not merely as instructors, but also as mentors and inspirational personalities.

It is rightly said that character is defined more by “what you do when you are not seen” than by “what you do when you are seen.” Therefore, the behind-the-scenes conduct of a teacher must be impeccable so that students develop deep respect for the teacher not only as an academic guide but also as a human being.

At the same time, teachers should try to build healthy “informal relationships” with students outside the classroom to understand them more closely. There is nothing inappropriate in having a cup of tea with students, participating in sports activities, or engaging in informal discussions, provided professional boundaries are maintained. Such interactions help bring teachers and students closer in social and emotional contexts, which is crucial for the overall development of students.

**Career Guidance:** Many students remain confused about their career goals, and the teacher often becomes their first point of guidance. Students frequently approach teachers for advice regarding specializations, career choices, higher studies, or future opportunities.

Although a teacher may not be an expert in every discipline or career pathway, he or she is still viewed as a trusted source who can show direction. Therefore, teachers should guide students to the best of their ability. They may also refer students to appropriate experts, colleagues, alumni, or even AI-based career guidance platforms that can assist students in making informed choices.

This is the minimum expected from a committed teacher. In fact, many students continue to seek guidance from their teachers even midway through their professional careers. Thus, the teacher-student relationship often becomes lifelong in nature.

**Mentoring Support:** Mentorship is perhaps the most significant support a teacher provides outside the classroom. A true mentor, through actions, interactions, deliberations, and thoughtful guidance, helps students understand themselves, discover their strengths, and realize their full potential.

Mentorship enables students to think rationally, make correct decisions, overcome difficulties, and evolve into responsible citizens. A mentor does not merely provide answers but helps students learn how to think, reflect, and grow independently.

Therefore, all teachers should consciously evolve themselves into effective mentors capable of providing meaningful guidance and emotional support to students beyond academics.

**Counselling Assistance:** Another important role played by teachers outside the classroom is that of counselling support. Many students face various academic and non-academic challenges during their educational

journey. These may include family-related problems, financial constraints, lack of confidence arising from social background, language barriers, emotional stress, peer pressure, anxiety, or adjustment issues.

Often, such students feel isolated and helpless, with no one to approach. In such situations, teachers frequently emerge as the first line of emotional support and guidance.

While all teachers may not be professionally trained counsellors, their experience, maturity, and empathetic approach can help students overcome many difficulties. When required, teachers may also refer students to professional counsellors or institutional support systems for specialised intervention.

Thus, teachers play an important diagnostic, supportive, and problem-solving role in the lives of students outside the classroom as well.

### **Moving Forward:**

The above discussion clearly demonstrates that a teacher's relationship with students extends far beyond classroom teaching. A truly effective teacher is one who strives to excel both inside and outside the classroom.

Such teachers not only impart knowledge but also inspire values, confidence, emotional strength, and direction in life. This deeper engagement helps unfold the true essence of the "Guru-Shishya relationship."

Teachers and students are not merely "learning together"; they are, in many ways, traversing the journey of life together.

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Based on the article by Dr. A. K. Sen Gupta, Director, SIESLLD in Free Press Journal (FPJ) on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026. He may be contacted at aksengupta51@gmail.com or 98211 28103.