

Saco Jump Start

A collaborative effort of the Saco Police Department headed by Chief Ray Demers and the Saco Jump Start Board of Directors. For more information please call: School Resource Officer Megan Tibbetts @ 282-4181, TA School Resource Officer Matt Roberts @ 282-3361, or Mentor Coordinator Mary Alice Tripp @ 283-1965.

Jump Start was founded by Lt. Douglas Sharlow of the Kennebunk PD and Lt. Gary Ronan of the Kennebunkport PS in August 1993. The program has grown and thrived in Cape Elizabeth, South Portland, Biddeford, and Saco. It is used as a model for programs around the country.

“It takes a village to raise a child”
-African Proverb

Jump Start encourages students, parents, schools, business organizations, faith communities, and law enforcement to work together to find common ground, mutual respect, and accountability. We strive to build a framework for positive change for our youth and communities.

Community Resources

Alcoholics Anonymous
1-800-73SOBER (737-6237)
Hot Line: (207) 774-3034

ALATEEN
207-284-1844 or 1-800-498-1844

Caring Unlimited
1-800-239-7298

Counseling Services, Inc.
Crisis Response
(207) 282-1500 or 1-888-568-1112

Maine State Child Abuse & Neglect Reports
1-800-452-1999

Sexual Assault Response Service (SARS)
1-800-313-9900

Sweetser
(207) 294-4000 or 1-800-434-3000

Sweetser Crisis Intervention
1-888-568-1112

York County Child Abuse & Neglect Council
(207) 985-5975

Youth Alternatives
Family Mediation Services
Portland, ME
(207) 874-1175

Saco Jump Start

A Mentoring and Decision Skills Building Program for Youth.



Encouraging community responsibility for youth and youth accountability to the community.

Saco Jump Start is:

- A mentoring program for first time, non-violent, juvenile offenders and “at-risk” youth.
- A program that encourages youth to be accountable to their community and the community to be accountable to its children.
- A curriculum-based, eight week decision-making/skills training program.
- A way to promote communication and interaction among youth, family, and their community.
- A way for community members from all walks of life to share their own experiences and wisdom.
- A confidential program where what is said in class is not discussed outside of class.
- Recognized by the courts as an alternative to the “wait for a hearing” system.
- A way to be part of the solution.
- A way to reduce juvenile offences.

Eight Week Curriculum

1. Know Yourself

Students develop an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes.

2. Know What You Want

Students learn how to develop short range, mid-range, and long range goals, while developing strategies for reaching those goals.

3. See The Situation Clearly

Students learn how emotions can affect the decision-making process. Youth are taught how to control their perceptions and thoughts relative to life’s situations.

4. Expand The Possibilities

Students are taught to consider multiple options when making a decision.

5. Evaluate, Decide, and Act

Students are taught to consider risks, odds, and outcomes when decision-making. Youth learn to take responsibility for their decisions and to accept consequences for their actions.

6. Team Building

Students learn to respect, trust, compromise, and share when working with others.

7. Parent’s Night

Parents meet with staff personnel while mentors assist students in developing a decision-making skills presentation.

8. Graduation Night

Students share affirmations with one another and discuss lessons learned.

What is a mentor?

A mentor is an adult volunteer willing to be partnered with a juvenile during an eight week decision making/skills training course held at the Saco Police Department. A mentor must be willing to share a little of themselves and to listen in a non-judgmental, non-confrontational way. All meetings happen as a group and are led by representatives of the Saco Police Department and trained facilitators.

Mentors are wonderful, ordinary people who do extraordinary things!

How do I become a mentor?

It’s easy! Pick up an application at the Saco Police Station and fill it out. You will be called for a brief (and painless) interview, and as long as you pass a criminal background check, you will be eligible to attend an orientation or observe a class or two. Plan to commit to one night a week (Thursday’s from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.) for eight weeks once a year (or more if you want). Then voila! You’re a mentor!