*Once you have been approved to be an SBTCA Breed Mentor, you are expected to follow these guidelines and ethical practices. Breed mentors must have strong ethics, and their integrity and devotion to the Staffordshire Bull Terrier must be above reproach. Ringside mentoring will be conducted in accordance with the most current AKC rules and with the highest level of discretion and professionalism. Mentors must always be aware that they are the guardians of the breed and therefore be cognizant of their personal behavior and of keeping the welfare of our breed as their highest priority.*

* Honor your commitment to mentor. You must be there on time and for the entire judging. If you need to leave your mentoring assignment, please ensure that a substitute mentor is available. Refrain from doing ringside mentoring at shows when you are exhibiting, unless all other avenues for mentors have been exhausted for that show. Only then, should you mentor and only up until the point that your exhibits sex is competing. (i.e. if you have a class dog you may mentor during class bitches; if you have a champion entry you can mentor up until the point of BOB competition). Realize that your conduct reflects on the SBTCA and breed, always maintain good sportsmanship.
* Distribute only SBTCA BOD approved materials. Be fully versed and adhere to the approved AKC Staffordshire Bull Terrier Standard without personal preference. And bring a copy with you to the mentoring session along with the SBT Illustrated Standard. Any additional materials must be submitted to the Judge Education Committee for approval of whether those materials should be shared and included for everyone.
* Potential judges will be in all stages of learning when they ask for ringside mentoring. Sometimes they're just about ready to apply to judge Stafford’s and are well versed in the breed. Others may never apply for the breed but are approved to judge Best in Show and want to know more in case they ever get one in the BIS ring. Or they may just be starting to learn and have never even been to a seminar. You need to tailor your discussion to the level of the aspiring judge. You can gauge that level quickly, and then take them to the next level.
* Accurate breed-specific hands-on examination technique is important. Demonstrate effective ways to go over head, front, shoulder placement, rear angulation, coats, point out identification of hallmark characteristics.
* Try to focus on the strengths of the dogs you are observing by pointing out excellent examples of specific Breed traits. Do NOT discuss wins, pedigrees, show records, registered names, titles or boasting of dog's or your accomplishments.
* The AKC encourages judges to refrain from fault judging. Please do not focus on pointing out the faults of each dog you are observing. Talk about how you would evaluate a dog against the Staffordshire Bull Terrier Breed Standard. Take time to point out the nuances of Breed type by highlighting the strengths of the Staffordshire Bull Terrier in each class you observe.
* Conduct ringside mentoring as if you are a judge seeing the dogs for the first time - what you would think of the dogs and how you would place them, and for what reasons. It's important to give the reasons for your placements. Don't try to second-guess the judge or criticize the judging, you are not seeing things from ringside the same way the judge does from within, but both you and the person learning have the same view of the dogs, so give your perspective from your mutual viewpoint.
* Provide your ringside opinion on how you would place dogs or discuss the order with the aspiring judge. This is where they learn how a breeder prioritizes virtues and faults,
* Ringside mentors should keep their conversations with their mentees at a comfortable level, so they are clear and concise. However, never allow those conversations to become a distraction to the exhibitors in the ring.
* Always refrain from pointing at exhibitors and their Staffords in the ring, when discussing those points on particular dogs. There are other ways to acknowledge which handler and dog you are speaking about. Always show discretion and respect for the exhibitors.
* If possible, ask some of the exhibitors if the person you are mentoring can go over their dog and discuss in more detail after the judging. (This is not a requirement for the Ringside Observation, but a good learning experience nonetheless.)
* Don't discuss breeding issues or history of a particular dog or exhibitor. Also avoid discussing health issues, breeder personality issues, or anything other than if you were a judge seeing these dogs for the first time that day.
* Being an SBTCA Breed Mentor does NOT license you to go up to a judge after judging the Staffordshire Bull Terrier to berate the judging. If you are concerned about the fitness or education of a judge in a particular situation, contact the SBTCA Judges Education Committee Chair.
* The Ringside Observation form is filled in first by the mentored judge followed by mentor’s comments after the previous section is complete. Be sure the form is filled out in its entirety.
* Take ownership in your breed. When you sign a form for a prospective judge for a ringside observation, tutoring session, long-term mentoring relationship etc., you are verifying that the experience occurred as described. If it did not, do not sign the form. If the individual displayed conceptual challenges and/or difficulties, state it on the form.
* Keep a record of those you mentor and for whom the forms are completed. Ask the mentee to email a copy of their forms to yourself as well as to the JEC Chair. This is a great way for the SBTCA to keep a working file on judges that have been mentored and are interested in judging the breed.
* Make sure to check with the JEC Chair about satisfaction forms prior to your mentoring session. Have your mentees complete those forms and return them to the JEC Chair.
* As an SBTCA approved breed mentor, the SBTCA has given you their vote of confidence that you can convey the essence of the Stafford to the people you are mentoring. Remember that everything that you do and say in this role reflects on the SBTCA. We are relying on the considerable knowledge that you already have. Just express it to someone who is eager to learn. It is your responsibility to make sure that future judges of our breed know what they're doing when they walk in the ring.

***By my signature below, I acknowledge that I understand and agree to abide by this SBTCA Ringside Mentoring Ethics and Guidelines document.***

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**