



MENTORING & GUIDANCE OF STUDENTS' POLICY



EPT Document Control

This policy applies to all Education Partnership Trust Schools.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Heights Free School (THFS) will ensure that all learners receive the care, guidance and support necessary to maintain and extend their personal development and academic progress.

1.2 We have high aspirations for all of our students and want to help them achieve and surpass their own expectations and those of the people who teach and care for them. This policy aims to identify the strategies deployed to ensure outstanding levels of mentoring and guidance.

2. What is Student Mentoring?

2.1 Student mentoring in THFS is defined as a one-to-one relationship between a young person and an adult that occurs over a prolonged period of time.

2.2 The mentor provides consistent support, guidance, and concrete help to a student to provide them with a positive role model.

2.3 Some students involved in the mentoring program may be going through a difficult and/or challenging situation, a period of life in which they need extra support, or they may simply need to have another significant adult present in their life.

2.4 The goal of student mentoring is to help all students involved in the mentoring program to gain the skills and confidence to be responsible for their own futures and develop to their full academic and personal potential.

2.5 Mentors will be selected on the basis of having the 'right kind of qualities', training and experience for the role and which match the needs of a particular student or groups of students. **For example, THFS might deploy a mentor to work with students to support their transition to the School. This is a critical factor in most Alternative Provision (AP) schools, including THFS, where our students come via a commissioning procedure (agreed with the LA and/or commissioning school) which often means either a part-time, or full time (but often short term) placement. In all cases, the transition process from the 'home' school to THFS is really important.**

2.6 If necessary, the school will utilise internal and external professionals to mentor students with specific or more specialised needs.

2.7 The frequency of meetings is dependent on each student's needs and will be recorded on their assessment file. If the intervention is failing to achieve the desired outcomes, students will be seen again by mentors and new interventions agreed.

2.8 We will ensure that students are not allowed to give up on themselves by making sure our systems are relentless and robust.

3. Adult Student Mentors

3.1 Any adult in the school learning community who becomes a student mentor must be someone who will be a positive influence in a child's life. The most crucial role for a student mentor is to be an adult who has time for a child or young person, who cares about them, who believes in them and is committed to a long term relationship with them.

3.2 It is very important to note that in some cases the relationship between the mentor and the student may be the only stability the child or young person knows, and the only time anyone spends quality time with them. Therefore, the school stipulates that a student mentor spend a minimum of one hour every fortnight with their child.

3.3 This relationship between the student and mentor will normally take place during the school day and on school property.

4. Guidance

4.1 It is vital that all students receive regular and informed guidance, have a wide range of experiences and understand where to get further information and advice. This will be evident through a number of initiatives, including;

- Tutor group time
- School assemblies
- PSHE and Citizenship lessons
- Individual learning reviews and target setting
- Career's guidance
- Further and Higher Education guidance
- Workplace learning experiences offered
- Community involvement opportunities

5. Characteristics of a Good Student Mentor

5.1 A good student mentor is someone who engages in a positive relationship with the student and gives them attention.

5.2 The mentor needs to have positive self-esteem, react well to stressful situations and tolerate frustrating situations.

5.3 They need to listen well and communicate on a level that the student can understand and not be judgmental.

5.4 The mentor needs to provide leadership and guidance and be a positive role model, nurturing a relationship that respects the student's dignity.

5.5 The mentor must always show up on time for sessions, be committed and accept their responsibilities.

5.6 A good mentor will reinforce the student's successes and challenge them to do better and be willing to give them a fresh start if there are any lapses.

5.7 They will not break the trust they have established, unless it is a safeguarding or child protection issue (**see *Safeguarding and Promoting Student Welfare and Child Protection and Staff Training Policies***).

6. Benefits of a Student Mentoring Programme

6.1 Students benefit by receiving the support and guidance of a caring adult or supportive peer and also receiving assistance with their academic studies.

6.2 Students will experience greater self-esteem and be motivated to succeed.

6.3 They will also receive encouragement to stay in education and progress to further and/or higher education and receive assistance in choosing a career path.

6.4 Mentored students will be encouraged to avoid the use of drugs and alcohol.

6.5 Student will also improve interpersonal relationships, such as with school the teaching staff and the student's family.

7. Benefits to Adult Mentors

7.1 Adults who volunteer to mentor students increase their involvement in the learning community and recognise they can make a difference.

7.2 They will gain new experience and knowledge about young people and the school community and contribute to the wider aims of community cohesion and regeneration

8. Benefits to the School

8.1 Having a student mentoring scheme helps to foster good community relations and contributes to the local and area targets for economic growth.

8.2 Students will be more motivated and aspirational which will improve morale amongst the learning community.

8.3 Mentoring will maximise the achievements of individual students and groups of students who are at risk of underperforming and remove barriers to achievement for vulnerable groups of students.

8.4 Mentoring enhances the skills of staff and students, improves student attendance and increases student retention.

9. Peer Mentoring

9.1 Peer mentors can be defined as;

'A body of students who have volunteered to undertake training so that they can offer support to other students experiencing particular problems, and help to reduce the amount of bullying in the school'.

9.2 The actual role of these students will be agreed between the students and the member of staff who coordinates them, **but could include the following aims;**

- To reduce the amount of bullying in the school by supporting those involved
- To be a 'port of call' for students with problems
- To act as an additional service to that provided by staff - complementing rather than competing with it
- To be accessible to pupils of any age, sex and background
- To provide support to pupils by listening rather than necessarily giving
- To act as a half-way house for situations which may need to be dealt with by those involved with whole school safeguarding or child protection issues

10. Peer Mentoring Coordinator

10.1 A member of the school staff will act as a coordinator for peer mentors. This person will be someone who wants to take on this role and is approved of by the group, not just be a staff member who is just given the role as part of a job description.

10.2 The role of the coordinator will be to provide guidance and advice for group members and to look after the emotional welfare of the students involved in the scheme.

10.3 They will ensure that students involved in the scheme can cope with their academic commitments.

10.4 They will organise and provide appropriate training in the areas of confidentiality, boundaries, listening skills, issues that can and cannot be dealt with by the students and when to refer on.

10.5 The coordinator will help the group maintain a flow of new volunteers and give assistance with general administration and access a budget (for publicity, badges etc.)

10.6 They will act as a mediator within the group when problems arise and deal with difficult issues within the group e.g. a member breaching confidentiality.

11. Benefits of Peer Mentoring

11.1 Peer mentoring is voluntary and therefore the students involved are motivated. It also helps to boost the self-esteem of those involved.

11.2 Peer mentoring provides realistic role models for other students and enables the volunteers to learn new and transferrable skills.

11.3 It can form part of community service/citizenship activities and is of benefit to the whole school community.

12. Partnership with Parents/ Carers

12.1 It is essential that parents/carers understand how we support and mentor the students and are able to contribute to progress. We will engage parents/ carers by;

- Providing regular communication and information about mentoring schemes

- Enabling parents/carers to attend mentoring sessions wherever appropriate
- Providing informative sessions to enable parents/carers to understand School priorities
- Offering parent/carer and student joint learning and/or social experiences
- Ensuring that parents/carers can celebrate their child's progress

13. The Role of the Designated Learning Mentor

13.1 In addition to the Student Mentors described this far in the policy; THFS recognises there is a nationally recognised training programme for **Designated Learning Mentors** who have very specific roles in schools.

13.2 The role of the Designated Learning Mentor within the school is to work with and help raise the achievements of students, who are for whatever reason, underachieving.

13.3 Underachievement may incorporate students with issues in the following areas;

- Punctuality
- Attendance or truancy
- Motivation
- Self esteem
- Behaviour and attitude towards others
- Concentration
- Study techniques and study skills
- Communication skills
- Organisational skills
- Barriers to learning that come from outside the school e.g. peer influence

14. Criteria for Mentoring by a Learning Mentor

14.1 Students who are supported by the Designated Learning Mentor will be students who are identified by staff as underachieving and not fulfilling their full academic potential.

14.2 They may need extra support in the development of their social skills and may be students who have been identified by the school in liaison with other agencies or the EWO as requiring extra support in the above areas

14.3 Students whose behaviour is deemed to be detrimental to their peers may be referred to the Designated Learning Mentor. They may be recommended by the SENCO as requiring additional 'social' support or have been identified by the Inclusion Team.

15. Learning Mentor Programme Student Exit Procedure

15.1 Criteria for exiting the mentoring programme might be data measuring the following;

- More confidence
- Improved attendance figures
- Behaviour improvements
- Positive feedback from staff
- Better levels of attainment

16. Monitoring and Review

16.1 The Mentoring Co-ordinator will review this policy as determined by the Governing Body and/or when legislation and guidance changes.

16.2 Its implementation and effectiveness will be monitored by the Deputy Headteacher and the Director of Learning SEND.

16.3 This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.