

FMS Team – Business Management and Networking in Schools Service

Mentoring Service

MENTORING GUIDANCE

1. What is Mentoring?

Some definitions and key points of mentoring:

- a. 'The main point of mentoring is that the focus is determined by the mentee. They must lead in identifying issues and, with guidance from the mentor, resolving them. The mentor is not there to provide 'the answer', but to guide the mentee towards 'the answer' that is right for them.' – Medical Research Council
- b. 'Mentoring is a supportive learning relationship between a caring individual who shares knowledge, experience and wisdom with another individual who is ready and willing to benefit from this exchange, to enrich their professional journey.' – Suzanne Faure
- c. 'Mentoring involves primarily listening with empathy, sharing experience (usually mutually), professional friendship, developing insight through reflection, being a sounding board, encouraging.' – David Clutterbuck
- d. 'Mentoring is a development partnership through which one person shares knowledge, skills, information, and perspective to foster the personal and professional growth of someone else' – cmcis mentor program,
- e. 'Mentoring is usually a 'three-way beneficial process' which helps the mentor, the mentee and the organization.' – M.K. Mason

2. What it takes to be a Mentor?

Some key skills and attributes of an effective mentor have been identified as follows:

- a. 'A mentor should have the qualities of experience, perspective and distance, challenging the mentee and using candour to force re-examination and re-prioritisation without being a crutch' – Christopher Conway
- b. 'A mentor facilitates personal and professional growth in an individual by sharing the knowledge and insights that have been learned through the years. The desire to want to share these 'life experiences' is characteristic of a successful mentor.' – ANG
- c. 'A mentor is a more experienced individual willing to share knowledge with someone less experienced in a relationship of mutual trust.' – David Clutterbuck
- d. 'Mentoring does require patience and time. Often, in the interest of time, we offer to do things ourselves, or to solve the problem at hand. This is not mentoring but taking over. The reason to become a mentor is that you have been there and done that. Now you are supporting someone else who would like to be these and do that themselves.' – Ann Marie Dinkel

- e. 'Give advice only after the mentee has worked out the problem and formulated some potential solutions. Your function is not to become the 'answer factory' but to help the mentee arrive at the best solution to the problem at hand. If your mentee is stuck, ask questions or tell stories of similar dilemmas to help focus thinking through the problem and arriving at a suitable answer.' – Ann Marie Dinkel
- f. A mentor should have the following skills and qualities:
 - Available time – mentoring will require a time commitment, so look at your existing time commitments and truly evaluate whether you can spare the time.
 - Appropriate knowledge and skills – you should be involved in a similar field to that of the mentee in order that you can provide guidance from an understanding of the area they are working in.
 - Listening skills – are you able to actively listen to others, not interrupting but listening and reflecting back what the mentee is saying.
 - Patient and supportive – as the relationship is led by the mentee you will need to be prepared to support them towards achieving their goals. You need to let them reach conclusions at their own pace and not impose your views or suggestions.

3. The Mentoring Process

In establishing a mentoring relationship, it is essential for the terms of the process to be agreed at the initial meeting. Items for consideration include:

- Clarification of the expectations and goals of the mentee – be clear about what can and cannot be provided and what areas you are unwilling to be involved in.
- Agree a schedule of meetings – you need to decide the frequency, length and location of meetings.
- How will communication outside of meetings be dealt with – you need to agree what is acceptable in terms of frequency, method, response times etc.
- Consider confidentiality
- Agree charges

Other Important Considerations:

- **The FMS Team is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any mentoring advice provided.**
- **The provision of mentoring is a school to school relationship and, as such, any dispute resolution is the responsibility of the schools participating in the relationship.**
- **If you have any doubt about providing the requested guidance please refer the mentee to the relevant LA professional service.**
- **If you have any doubt about the guidance you have received as a mentee please refer to the relevant LA professional service to verify what you have been told.**
- **Charges need to be agreed and made on a school to school basis**