

# cheltenham tutors

*An education service*

## **Safeguarding in Mentoring**

Mentoring deserves a category of its own regarding safeguarding. It is important to make very clear what policies and practices are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of the child. All of the practices regarding safeguarding are built on the foundation of what has already been mentioned.

Mentoring is a personal, professional and pastoral relationship between the mentor and the mentee. The mentoring sessions will by nature involve conversations in a 1-2-1 setting and this means that the upmost care is taken when considering the safeguarding of the child.

We have these practices in place to ensure the safety of the children:

- First of all, the mentors all hold valid DBS documents which will always be presented, along with a valid form of ID, at reception
- The mentoring sessions will always happen in a set room which has been designated by the school and which staff in the school know is being used for mentoring
- The mentor will always ensure that staff know when the mentoring sessions is starting and ending
- The door to the room which has the mentoring session in must have glass in it so that it is possible to see inside
- The mentor will never block the glass through anything being stuck onto it or anything intentionally blocking visibility from either side
- Comprehensive notes will be kept from the mentoring sessions, documenting what is happening and what has been discussed
- It will be made clear to the mentee at the outset of the sessions that confidentiality cannot be promised, and that even though the mentoring sessions provide a safe-space to talk, if something is disclosed that suggests that the child is or may be at risk, this information will be passed on as a priority to the school's DSL
- The mentor will follow the policy and practices laid down in this document in ensuring that the information is passed onto the DSL speedily, accurately and in writing
- The mentor will at all times follow the procedures of the school in its safeguarding policies
- The mentor will ensure that he or she is aware of who the DSL and the DDSL is in the school

If at any point in the mentoring sessions, a concern is raised regarding on the staff in the school, this information will be passed onto the DSL. If the concern involves the DSL, then this information will be passed onto headteacher (if this is different from the DSL) and the LADO.

# cheltenham tutors

*An education service*

## **Physical contact in mentoring**

Mentoring is intended to build a strong, pastoral relationship between the mentor and the mentee. This is the aim of mentoring and it is to be commended as a valuable service. However, boundaries are important to ensure that the safety of the child is kept paramount at all times. Regarding physical contact, this means that:

- No physical touch will be sought or requested as a mentor
- A 'normal' level of physical touch will not be avoided but will not be sought for either. Such 'normal' examples of physical touch would include: shaking hands, high fives, patting a shoulder. These will not be sought for and at all times the mentor will try to ensure that the minimum physical touch happens as possible, for the well-being of the child. If the child were to initiate a high-five, this would not be rejected. It would not however be initiated by the mentor
- In the situation where the mentee sought physical touch beyond the 'normal' examples of everyday life (handshaking, high-fives, affirmational pat on a shoulder) such as a hug, the mentor would politely request that this did not happen, explaining the safeguarding practices. It would always be made clear to the mentee if the physical touch being sought was not 'normal' (as noted above)
- The DSL would be informed if the mentee was not respecting the request to not initiate physical contact. It would be made clear to the DSL that physical touch was being sought by the child. This would be passed on as a concern regarding the safeguarding of the mentoring sessions as well as potentially an indicator of safeguarding issues on a wider scale. The DSL would be asked to explain (or have an adult in the school explain) to the child that the physical touch could not happen
- If the mentee did not listen to the mentor or the DSL, the mentoring sessions would be stopped so as to ensure that the well-being and safety of the mentor and mentee are not compromised

## **Emotional support in mentoring**

Mentoring provides a pastoral relationship between the mentor and the mentee. It is normal that emotional attachment would occur in this instance – in that a mutual appreciation of each other's company would be developed. This is important for the successful implementation and practice of mentoring. Mentoring assumes emotional connection. However, mentors will be very careful to ensure that emotional connection is monitored and that any concerns are raised with the DSL.

For example,

- If the mentee was showing signs of becoming inappropriately emotionally connected to the mentor (prioritising the mentoring relationship to the exclusion of other relationships; refusing to talk to anyone except the mentor; becoming dependent upon the mentor for affirmation) then this would be flagged with the DSL as a concern. The

# cheltenham tutors

*An education service*

mentoring sessions would not necessarily be stopped straight away, as it is not so easy to assess 'inappropriate' emotional connection as it is with physical touch (which can be seen). However, the sessions would be closely monitored, with the mentor feeding back to the DSL after each session how the session went and how the pupil was. The DSL will have the final say if the sessions should end.

- If the DSL is not concerned by the emotional connection but the mentor was, the mentor will inform the school via the DSL and headteacher that the mentoring sessions will come to an end after one final session. In this session, the reasons for ending the session can be made clear to the mentee (it will be up to the headteacher and DSL what reasons are given for ending the session).
- If a mentee seems to show signs of being attracted to a mentor (to have a crush on him/her) this will be raised with the DSL and as above, it will be monitored after each session. If the mentor feels uncomfortable with the situation, the mentor has the right to end the sessions after one final session with the mentee (as above).

## **Contact details**

The mentor will have no contact details regarding the mentee. Only the mentee's name, age, and relevant information regarding him/her (to be decided by the DSL what is relevant) will be requested and used. No contact information will be shared with the mentee at any time. No social media connections will be made and if the mentee requests to make a connection via social media, it will be politely declined by the mentor (who will explain the reason being safeguarding). The mentor and mentee will only meet in the school on allocated days and will under no circumstances meet outside of school. Every meeting that happens with the mentor will be held in school, in the same room each time, and clear notes will be kept as to the details of the session.