Westminster Tutors

Mentoring Policy

Contents

1. Introduction & Process

2.1   This Mentoring Policy forms part of the college Curriculum Policy.

2.2   The college ethos and values of academic excellence, bespoke and individual education, and inclusive support underpin it. Westminster Tutors is a specialist, high-achieving Sixth Form College. Our Tutors are highly experienced in teaching A-levels, and our mentors are focused on supporting students' smooth transfer from GCSE through their courses and ultimately in their successful progress to university and the world of work. The Mentoring Programme is vital to a student's development. As part of our community, students are supported in building useful skills like revision and time management, while also developing socially, culturally, professionally and academically. They'll have chances to improve their communication, understand their rights and responsibilities, and grow into informed, active members of society. Mentoring gives students a safe space to talk through any worries- whether it's about coursework, mental health, social life, organisation, or academic challenges- and offers help with things like UCAS applications when needed.

2. Intent

3.1   To offer additional academic and pastoral support to all students, focussing on study skills and mental health.

3.2   Mentoring is an inclusive, bespoke programme that also enables one-to-one mentoring explicitly tailored to those with SEND/EHCP.

3.3   It includes the provision of individual support through facilitating curriculum 'Plan, Do, Review' discussions to develop teaching and learning strategies in partnership with subject tutors, helping students progress in their A-levels.

3. Background

4.1   The Westminster Tutors Academic Mentoring Programme aims to empower students to reach their academic goals and foster holistic development.

4.2   We are committed to equipping our students with essential study skills, promoting well-being, enhancing executive function skills, and cultivating metacognition through personalised coaching.

4.3   Our programme is built on the belief that education extends beyond the classroom, and our primary goal is to support students in their journey towards academic excellence and personal growth. We strive to achieve this mission through the following core principles:
● Holistic Development: We understand that success in college goes beyond academics. Our programme promotes well-being by addressing the social, emotional, and physical aspects of a student's life, helping them achieve a nourishing college experience.
● Study Skills Mastery: We are dedicated to teaching students effective study techniques, time management, and organisational strategies to enhance their learning experience. We believe that these skills are the foundation of academic success.

- Executive Function Skills Enhancement: Our program focuses on developing essential executive function skills such as goal setting, planning, prioritisation, and task execution. We equip students with the tools to excel in a fast-paced, ever-changing academic environment.
- Metacognition Cultivation: We empower students to think about their thinking, reflect on their learning processes, and adapt their strategies for success. Metacognition fosters critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, enabling students to become self-directed learners.
- Personalised Coaching Approach: We understand that every student has unique strengths and challenges. Our mentors provide individualised guidance tailored to each student's needs, helping them set and achieve their academic and personal goals.
- Empowering Independence: Our ultimate aim is to nurture students' independence. We provide them with the acceptance, tools and knowledge to become confident learners who feel equipped to comfortably navigate the complexities of higher education and the world beyond.
- Community Engagement: We promote a sense of belonging and community among our students, encouraging peer-to-peer support and collaboration in PSHCE discussion groups. Community engagement creates an environment where students develop social bonds and build relational, health, social, and economic skills.
- Promoting Fundamental British Values: We actively uphold and promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different beliefs and backgrounds. Our programme, combined with PSHCE, fosters an environment where students excel academically and learn to embrace these values as integral components of their educational journey.

4.4   Our College Academic Mentoring Programme supports students as they embark on their academic journey, providing them with the skills and support they need to excel academically, thrive personally, and become well-rounded, empowered individuals. Together, we aim to create a nurturing, student-centred community that fosters success and growth for all.

4. Implementation

5.1   During their time at Westminster Tutors, students will have a dedicated Mentor who will be their go-to person for any queries or advice. The relationship between an individual student and their Mentor is vital to the student experience.

5.2   Students work with their Mentor for 1:1 weekly timetabled and registered sessions during term time, lasting 60 minutes per week. Year 12 and 13 students are allocated 60 minutes, to support their transition to A-levels and the college, and to fully embed the study skills needed for success. SEND, EHCP students and some students who may benefit from extra support with their well-being (such as health or safeguarding needs) also have 60-minute mentoring sessions. The weekly meetings are tailored to the individual, and time is flexible according to each student's changing needs and goals during the year.

5.3   The mentoring programme contains a range of core themes and content, with key aspects identified as essential for all students and others that may be visited briefly or skipped if they are not the best fit for the individual's development.
- Essential
- Core
- Additional

6. Mentoring Session Structure

6.1   Mentoring session will generally cover the following aspects:
- Discuss how the student is finding the week/their studies since the last meeting.
- Discuss what and how the student has revised that week.
- Provide an overview of student progress (where they are in the spec, review plan until next goal- exams, mocks, UCAS, CVs, etc.)
- Discussion of what the student needs most in mentoring that day (focus on organisation, academic content, revision skills, emotional or social development, cognition)
- Mentor communicates with teachers to identify areas for improvement, tasks, or concerns that can be developed outside of class time and in a comfortable setting.
- Mentors additionally review homework recorded by tutors in the lesson records – this will often lead to tips on study skills or motivation, etc.
- Students reflect on their academic progress, and, if appropriate, the mentor coaches the student to identify targets for the week.
- Mentors will help with exam technique.
- Use of metacognition frameworks integrated to build and embed metacognitive skills.
- Students with SEND and EHCP will focus individually on identified strategies.
- Mentor records what took place in the session and targets for the next session if appropriate. These targets promote increased self-awareness and may focus on any aspect the young person identifies for development.

7. Content of Mentoring

8.1   The Mentoring Programme contains the following elements: Study Skills, including metacognition, organisation, grammar and consolidation; Future Ready, including UCAS; Physical and Emotional Health; Community, including social and cultural.

Study Skills

8.2   The Mentoring Programme looks at study habits and organisation, promoting active learning, good communication skills and independence, focusing on the following:
- Effective note-taking and study habits.
- Content and revision organisation.
- Prioritisation.
- Task initiation.
- Time management.
- Revision techniques, memory and planning.
- Grammar and reading.
- Useful external sources.
- Using time effectively.
- Managing procrastination.

8.3   Success in employment and higher education depends on being resourceful, independent and adaptable.

8.4   To help develop these qualities, students are given guidance on study skills and separate access to resources and facilities, both physical and digital, which support their development of skills towards successful progression into the world of work and higher education.

Metacognition

8.5   Metacognition is a set of behaviours that maximise the potential and efficacy of learning.

8.6   'A metacognitive learner has knowledge and control over cognitive skills and processes. They understand how learning happens, and they can actively and independently apply this understanding to help them learn most effectively and sustain that learning into the future.'

8.7   The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) divides metacognition into three helpful strands.
- Metacognitive knowledge: a learner has knowledge about the task at hand, what they know about themselves, and what strategies they know to help them complete the task.
- Metacognitive regulation: the learner's ability to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning whilst completing the task. This is about actively applying metacognitive knowledge in real-time.
- Metacognitive motivation: the extent to which a learner wants to perform a task, related closely to their interest in the task and belief in their ability to succeed (self-efficacy).

8.8   A metacognitive learner is highly skilled; this level of knowledge and independence takes time and is not achieved by 'doing' metacognitive activities in the classroom. Instead, we see metacognition as a framework around everything else we do. The EEF toolkit ranks metacognition and self-regulation as the second most impactful strategy behind feedback. Thus, metacognition reflections integrated into one-to-one Mentoring offer the space and time to build and embed metacognitive skills.

Grammar and Consolidation

8.9   In mentoring A-level students at our small independent college, grammar skills and consolidation of specification material are addressed through focused review sessions.

8.10   Teachers provide targeted feedback on work to develop grammatical accuracy and clarity while revisiting key specification topics to reinforce understanding. This approach ensures students improve their academic writing and retain critical subject knowledge, supporting their overall success in their A-level studies.

Future Ready

8.11   In addition to one-to-one support from a senior member of the team, mentors also support students with their UCAS Applications throughout the process; this includes Year 12 discussions of possible progression routes and courses at the start of Year 13 UCAS registration, personal statement writing, work-study, and final university choices and form completion.

8.12   Mentors will also be available for further discussions of the next steps in the spring and summer of Year 13, when student finance, living independently, results and Clearing come into focus.

8.13   Students benefit from thinking through what life will be like when they start to live independently. This can help ease the transition period when they go to university or on a Gap Year.

8.14   Some content covered will include navigating the world safely (in-person and digital), managing finances and budgeting, preparing to live independently, CV writing, and what life is like at university.

<u>Health</u>

8.15   Mentors will discuss with students how to look after physical and sexual health, discuss coping with stress, anxiety, social and cultural difficulties and developments, consent, and drug and alcohol awareness.

8.16   Some of the content is designed to raise awareness of issues and to inform students about the laws and services they can access.

8.17   Mentors are informed and equipped with material on these topics and will respond to the student's needs and concerns accordingly.

8.18   Any safeguarding concerns about students will be reported to the DSL or DDSL, and the MyConcern system will be used.

8. Record Keeping

9.1   Each mentor is tasked with recording reflections on every session within student records.

9.2   While the format is flexible, these records should include termly and half-termly reports, outline specific targets, and track progress towards achieving them.

9.3   If targets are found to be unsuitable or are not being met, the records should offer a clear rationale detailing any actions taken or reasons for not taking action.

9.4   Mentors should also note if any safeguarding concerns have been reported, the specifics of the concern must be retained on MyConcern rather than in the student record.

9.5   Additionally, mentors will perform and document SEND reviews each half term to evaluate and communicate the effectiveness of SEND strategies.

9. The Role of the Mentor

10.1   At the start of the year, the Mentor's priority is to help the student settle quickly, whether new or returning, and adapt to each individual.

10.2   Students are unique; sometimes, pastoral support will form most of a session. However, it is essential to note that while we offer pastoral support, the college does not provide in-house counselling, therapy or clinical psychological support.

10.3   The Mentor can use coaching strategies, skilfully questioning the student to draw out the aspects in which the student wishes to bring about change.

10.4   Mentors will meet each term for comprehensive meetings to address important topics.

10.5   Mentor sessions will focus on discussing any questions or concerns that may have arisen, setting and reviewing targets, and analysing term and half-term reports to track students' academic and pastoral progress.

10.6   Additionally, mentors will collaborate on upcoming deadlines and establish new goals for the forthcoming term.

10.7   Mentor meetings provide a valuable opportunity for mentors to exchange ideas, share effective strategies and materials, and ensure consistency in their approach. By fostering a collaborative environment, we aim to continually enhance the quality of mentoring and support provided to our A-level students.

The Mentor Will

● Listen and provide a space for the student to feel supported.
● Get to know the student's preferred study methods and any SEND/EHCP needs, and work with the student to maximise effectiveness, facilitating academic progress balanced with maintaining well-being.
● Facilitate metacognition reflections to build and embed metacognitive skills; they will drill down into identified areas of skills deficit and deploy metacognition strategies to support positive student understanding of the learning process and take control of the solutions.
● Highlight the purpose and discuss how to prepare for internal assessment points throughout the year, such as baseline assessments, progress reports, mocks and end-of-year exams.
● Support Y13 students with university applications.
● Provide pastoral support, including reporting anything concerning (even small issues) on MyConcern. If they have concerns about the well-being and/or safety of the young person, they will also make referrals to senior colleagues and the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).
● Notify the appropriate member of staff who will contact the feepayer or parent if the student has not arrived or has gone missing, according to the Late or Missing Policy.
● Communicate with the appropriate member of staff who will contact the home about pastoral concerns; this would usually be the SLT Personal Tutor/DSL/SLT.
● Signpost to external sources of support and disseminate information about key dates and events in the college calendar.
● Develop CV and work-study skills.
● Record and share information appropriately with other college members to support the student, particularly regarding academic progress, including SEND/EHCP reviews and well-being.
● Record reflections on each lesson on the student record.

10. Mentoring and the Role of Safeguarding

10.1   Mentors are expected to report all concerns, no matter how minor they may seem, on the MyConcern platform with clear and objective detail.

10.2   The designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will review and address each reported concern to implement appropriate safeguarding measures.

10.3   Mentors are responsible for ensuring that each mentee's safeguarding surveys are completed and submitted by the designated deadlines. This proactive approach is crucial in maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all students and underscores our commitment to the highest standards of safeguarding practice.

10.4   Quality assurance ensures that every student receives the highest standard of guidance and support.

10.5   Westminster Tutors meticulously evaluates our mentoring practices through regular student and mentor feedback, setting measurable goals to track progress and effectiveness.

10.6   Mentors will undergo continuous training and professional development to stay abreast of best practices and emerging educational trends.

10.7   Additionally, the impact of mentoring on student outcomes will be continuously monitored and assessed through record-keeping and mentor meetings, ensuring that each student's unique needs are met and that the mentoring experience is both enriching and effective.

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