

# The St Michael Steiner School

## Staff Mentoring Policy

The College is responsible for the quality of the education offered, as well as the management and administration of the school. Forms and protocols have been developed to ensure that there is both support for colleagues and a striving toward excellence in teaching, administration and management throughout the school. To be truly professional in the monitoring and support of our colleagues' work, all staff are mentored

Mentor and mentee usually come together through mutual agreement. The College may suggest a certain mentor if someone needs a particular kind of support.

New members of staff are assigned a mentor by the College on appointment. They will meet regularly and the mentor reports to College. The mentor/mentee relationship initially lasts for one year, after which a new mentor might be found. However, often, a close, mutually beneficial, working relationship develops between mentor and mentee and this can continue indefinitely. In practice, colleagues also approach others for support and exchange of ideas.

Because they carry this responsibility, mentors are usually College members, but occasionally a non-College member who has relevant specialist knowledge or experience will be appointed and will report to a College member who will, in turn, report to College in a general way.

### The role of the Mentor is:

- to observe the mentee teaching and give honest, specific, constructive feedback
- to provide professional advice and guidance, or access to it via courses, external advisors etc. as the need arises
- to broach with the mentee any concerns that may arise on either side
- to ensure the College is aware of the mentee's progress
- to ensure that the mentee has completed any statutory training, or training required by the school, by deadlines set
- to ensure that the mentee has read the Staff Code of Conduct and Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) before the start of the school year
- in the case of a new member of staff, to introduce and explain, through the Staff Handbook or Visitor's Handbook, the school's policies and ways of working as detailed in the Staff Induction Policy.

### Responsibilities of Mentors

Each staff member is accountable to his or her mentor and each mentor is accountable to the College and should inform the member of College responsible for overseeing mentoring of any meetings and, in a general way, the issues/topics discussed.

Mentors should make more detailed notes about mentor meetings and share them with the mentee.

These notes and any reports about the mentee must be kept securely on a password protected computer or external hard drive.

These notes must be made available to inspectors and, if necessary, Trustees or the College Chair.

For further information, See Guidelines for Staff Mentoring and Observing in Lessons

### Mentoring Teaching Staff (Lower, Middle and High School)

The quality of education offered in the school benefits from the sharing of practice; the most experienced teacher can learn from the least experienced. We encourage and expect all staff to welcome a colleague into their classrooms at least twice a term. This should not be seen as an inspection but as an opportunity for professional development for both parties.

The following are good practice, regardless of the degree of experience a teacher has, but are expectations in the case of those in their first year of teaching:

- The mentor should ensure that a new staff member is clear about the details of their contract and understands what is expected of them.
- Each teacher is visited by their mentor in the classroom at least twice a term in the first year and regularly thereafter either by the mentor or other colleagues.
- Mentor and mentee should meet once a week in the first year and regularly (at least twice a term) thereafter; mentoring sessions should be timetabled, notes kept and shared with the mentee in order to ensure clarity about what has been discussed.
- The mentor should satisfy themselves, through conversation with the mentee, that they have a good grasp and understanding of the stage of development of the children/students they teach, of the subjects being taught and of how these two things are related.
- Preparation should be shared with the mentor, along with background research, materials needed, and plans for the work the children will do.
- The mentee should be asked to share the review of their current or last block(s) or most recent lessons with the mentor
- The mentor should be aware of the relationship between teacher and class(es) and that the children are learning; they should look at the children/students' work regularly.
- The mentor should be aware of any difficulties in the class and/or the mentee's lessons and ensure that the mentee is addressing the needs of all of the children.
- The mentor should advise the mentee of any available, relevant professional development opportunities.
- The mentor should be aware of the mentee's relationships with parents and colleagues.

- Except for trivial matters, the mentee should share with the mentor any written communications that are to be sent out to parents, including and especially end of year reports, before they are sent.
- The mentor should try to be present at the mentee's individual or class parent meetings. If this is not possible, the mentor should ensure that another College member is present.
- Unless there is a more serious concern, reports to College should be general and mentors need to be conscious that the mentor/mentee relationship depends on trust and confidentiality. However, at the same time, the College remains responsible for the education being offered in the school and therefore must have a clear picture of it.

## Mentoring Early Years Staff

With reference to the general principles above, these are additional points specifically relevant to mentoring in the early years:

- The mentor should ensure that the staff member is clear about the details of their contract and understands what is expected of them.
- Staff in our early years department will always be working with at least one other person in the room at all times.
- The mentor should satisfy themselves, through conversation with the mentee, that they have regard for creating a nourishing and appropriate early years environment, both indoors and outside, for the children in their care.
- The mentor should be aware of the relationship between the mentee and their co-worker and ensure that this is collaborative and supportive.
- The mentor should ensure that observation and assessment of children and curriculum planning are being undertaken in a timely manner and are in line with the ethos of our early years department and of the school generally.

## Mentoring New Staff

All staff contracts include a probationary period. Mentors must ensure that any concerns are raised and discussed with the mentee, that communication is clear and maintained throughout the probationary period, and that these concerns and what is being done about them are recorded in the College minutes.

If the mentor finds that the mentee is not progressing well by half way through the probationary period, they can recommend that the College brings in another person to mentor, to get a second opinion.

If the concerns are shared by the second mentor, then the College must:

- offer all reasonable support to enable the staff member to do their work successfully.
- assess what support is needed and decide who should provide it, when and how.

- set a review date.
- ensure that the support is provided and progress is monitored.
- decide, towards the end of the probationary period, whether or not to offer a permanent position.
- follow the appropriate procedure for the end of the probationary period as detailed in the Staff Contract and Staff Handbook.

If, at any point after the probationary period has passed, a mentor has concerns about their mentee, the first three steps above should be taken. If the situation does not improve, the College must decide whether to terminate the staff member's employment, bearing in mind that all staff have certain rights under employment law, the most significant being a) that the employee was aware of what was expected of them, b) that they were made aware of the school's concerns as soon as they arose, and c) that the school made every effort to enable them to fulfill their role successfully within a reasonable period of time.

### Mentoring Peripatetic and temporary teaching staff (High School)

- Regular and occasional peripatetic and temporary teachers are mentored by the full-time High School staff collectively.
- The mentor should provide the visiting teacher with a copy of the Visitors' Handbook and ensure they have read the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding sections in particular.
- The mentors should ensure that the visiting teacher is clear about the details of their contract and understands what is expected of them.
- Visiting Teachers attend weekly High School meetings when they are teaching in the school and can bring any concerns or questions they may have to these meetings
- Visiting teachers should be observed teaching at least once during each visit by a High School teacher who is also a member of College
- Visiting teachers report on their work at the High School meeting weekly during their time at the school. These meetings are minuted and minutes distributed to College members.

### Mentoring Peripatetic and Temporary Teaching Staff (Lower and Middle School)

Occasional peripatetic and temporary teachers are mentored by the Class Teacher whose class they are teaching unless absent, in which case another staff member will be appointed (see Staff Absence Policy)

- The mentor should provide the mentee with a copy of the Visitors' Handbook, ensure they have read the Code of Conduct and Safeguarding sections in particular, and answer any questions they may have.
- The mentor should ensure that the staff member is clear about the details of their contract and understands what is expected of them.
- Visiting teachers should attend weekly department meetings when they are teaching in the school and can bring any concerns or questions they may have to these meetings
- The mentor should observe the visiting teacher teaching at least once during each visit
- Visiting teachers should report on their work at the department meeting weekly during their time at the school. These meetings are minuted and minutes distributed to College members.

## Mentoring Non-Teaching Staff

- The mentor should ensure that a new staff member is clear about the details of their contract and understands what is expected of them.
- Mentor and new mentee should meet before school starts to go through some basic school rules and established practice. These are provided in the Staff Handbook, but day to day practice needs to be talked over from time to time.
- Mentor and mentee should meet **at least twice a term**; mentoring sessions should be timetabled and notes taken and shared with the mentee in order to ensure clarity about what has been discussed.
- The mentor should be aware of the mentee's relationships with parents and colleagues and of any difficulties.
- Except for day to day responses to emails and enquiries, the mentee should share with the mentor any written communications that are to be sent out to parents, before they are sent.
- Unless there is a concern, reports to College should be general and mentors need to be conscious that the mentor/mentee relationship depends on trust and confidentiality. However, at the same time, the College remains responsible for all aspects of the school and therefore must have a clear picture of it.

## Mentoring Trustees

- Trustees should be mentored by the College member who is responsible for the trustee's designated area of responsibility, if any.
- The mentor should ensure that the trustee has undertaken any necessary training in relation to their area of responsibility.
- Trustees who do not have a designated area of responsibility can be mentored by any College member.

- Meetings should take place, in person or virtually, at least once a term.

### Addressing concerns about colleagues

If a mentor has any concerns about a mentee, they will report to two other College members, who will decide what steps need to be taken. In the first instance, two designated College members will meet with the staff member about whom there are concerns. The aim of this meeting is to discern, and try to provide, whatever support is needed. If the issue needs to be taken further, the staff disciplinary procedure will be followed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Huppin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Approved by the Chair of Trustees

Review date February 2024