



MENTORING POLICY FOR NEW GOVERNORS

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POLICY AND PURPOSE

A Mentor is an experienced and trusted advisor and guide. Mentoring is part of the governor induction process and works in addition to, not instead of, other formal induction and development opportunities.

The essence of the mentoring process is that the experienced Governor (Mentor) makes time available to assist a new Governor in developing the necessary knowledge and skills to undertake the role effectively. Occasional face-to-face meetings are likely to be most effective but valuable support can be given by telephone, email, Zoom or similar.

The Mentor is not required to train the new Governor or to provide explicit instructions. If the Mentor or the new Governor identifies training needs, they should ask the Clerk how those can be met.

Newly appointed Governors will be offered the opportunity to be paired with an experienced Governor.

AIM

The aim is to ease the introduction of the new Governor to the Board by providing:

- a known and friendly face at their first meeting;
- someone who can help navigate through what may be a mass of new jargon, terminology, structures and processes.

PROCEDURE

On appointment of a new Governor, the Board Membership committee will identify a 'mentor'. As Mentor he/she will:

- offer to meet with the new Governor when they are appointed or prior to his / her first Board meeting to go through the agenda
- sit with the new Governor at his / her first Board meeting
- be available thereafter, as a sounding board and someone to whom the new Governor can refer to for help and advice
- to continue the relationship for a suggested twelve months, (unless otherwise agreed between the Mentor and new Governor.
- be a good listener and to encourage the new governor to identify approaches to adopt in certain situations. The mentor is not required to train the new governor or to provide explicit instructions on how to behave or act in particular circumstances.

The role of the Mentor will supplement the advice and support given by the Chair of Governors, Chairs of Committees, CEO and/or Clerk.

(In the event that the Mentor will not be at the first meeting attended by the new Governor, the Chair of Governors / Chair of the Committee will make contact with the new Governor in advance of the meeting.)

PRACTICE

New Governors are allocated a volunteer Mentor from amongst the more experienced Governors, agreed by the CEO and Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Body and with the agreement of the proposed Mentor. The Clerk would provide contact details for the two individuals who would then enter into an informal support arrangement.

It is anticipated that such an arrangement would last for about 12 months, or for as long as each partner felt it was needed. If during this time, the experienced Governor's participation ceased for whatever reason, then another could be nominated if required. Exactly how much the new Governor would require of a Mentor would vary in individual cases and would largely depend upon their prior knowledge of the College and /or the Further Education Sector.

The mentoring arrangements will remain informal and will continue so long as each partner is willing. Should, at any time, either party not wish to continue the arrangement, this should be agreed between the Mentor and the new Governor. Should the new Governor wish to seek the support of another Mentor, they should contact the Clerk in the first instance, who will then, in consultation with the Chair, seek to appoint a new Mentor, if appropriate.

THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR

The essence of the Mentoring relationship is that an experienced Governor would make him/herself available to assist a new colleague to quickly develop the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to effectively fulfil the role, and together agree some clear objectives. The Mentor needs to be a friendly face and provide personal support to help the new Governor navigate through the terminology in the board papers.

The Mentor should contact the new Governor when the board papers are sent out in order to go through the pack, answer questions and if necessary, draw attention to key issues and background. It is important that the new Governor understands they do not have to master all the details in the pack but use the executive summary sheets to identify what the paper is about and the key recommendations. If possible, it is recommended that the Mentor and new Governor meet prior to the board meeting and sit together at the meeting.

The Mentor would not be required to "train" the new Governor or to provide explicit instructions on how to behave in specific circumstances; rather s/he would be a "good listener", able to informally encourage the new Governor and help them to comprehend the context of the organisation as well as the College itself. It would be entirely appropriate for the Mentor to answer factual questions and to direct the new Governor to other valuable sources of information for example the Clerk or a member of the Executive Leadership team.

During the first 6 months it is important that the Mentor actively seeks to identify issues where the new Governor needs further clarification, information and training. Some of these issues may be addressed by the Mentor and others referred to the Clerk.

Effective mentoring makes an important contribution to a new Governor's capability to contribute to the work of the Governing Body and to enjoy the role.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Clerk will oversee the Mentoring arrangements, and the policy will be reviewed by the Board Membership Committee every three years in line with other College policies.