



SENDAT Coaching and Mentoring Policy

To be read in conjunction with but not limited to:

- Welfare and Discipline (student) policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Data protection policy
- Acceptable use policy
- Code of conduct
- Mental Health and Wellbeing

and other relevant policies and procedures

History of Document

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Reference: Mentoring: Supporting and Promoting Professional Development and Learning

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SENDAT Coaching and Mentoring Policy

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

SENDAT is a Multi Academy Trust specialising in the care and education of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This policy should be considered in the light of this context and the complexity of need that is accommodated within the Trust and its constituent Schools / Alternative Provisions (APs).

2. PURPOSE

To assist SENDAT staff colleagues (coaches and mentees) at all levels to develop their professional competence, achieve their learning objectives and develop their professional behaviours through peer or other mentoring as appropriate.

3. INTRODUCTION

Coaching and mentoring are very effective development methods to assist individuals to reflect, identify and achieve their goals and support the transfer of their learning and competence to promote the best outcomes for SENDAT students.

The working relationships that develop through coaching and mentoring help support and develop their skills and knowledge for the School/AP and the wider Trust. Coaching and mentoring are intended to be positive methods of encouraging staff to unlock their potential and maximise their own work performance.

The roles and responsibilities of the head of organisation and managers/supervisors with respect to staff development and performance management in no way diminish the application of this policy.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to provide a common framework based on best practice principles, to support and inform the design and development of coaching and mentoring practice for SENDAT and its constituent Schools/APs.

The specific objectives of the policy are to:

- Emphasise that coaching and mentoring are voluntary relationships;
- Explicitly recognise coaching and mentoring as a valued element of the staff development framework;
- Ensure that coaching and mentoring, particularly in support of individual development and career advancement, is neither confused with nor substituted for supervisory responsibilities arising from the performance appraisal system;
- Establish that coaching and mentoring relationships in whatever form are governed by existing relevant SENDAT policies;

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- Promote and encourage the growth of formal mentoring programmes which are part of the strategic vision of SENDAT.

Senior Leadership teams across the Trust will review the mentoring needs of their staff as part of their annual planning process.

The specific aims of coaching and mentoring are to:

- Provide a timely and structured learning and development opportunity based on the specific needs of the employee and delivered at their own pace;
- Improve confidence and self-esteem;
- Increase motivation to take positive action;
- Develop the individual's own understanding of the School/AP or wider Trust context and processes;
- Develop new insights and ways of working;
- Provide an opportunity to receive safe and supportive feedback;
- Provide an opportunity for employees to reflect on and plan their career development.

5. SCOPE

A programme of coaching and/or mentoring will be agreed under any one of the following circumstances:

- For employees when agreed as part of the annual Appraisal process;
- For employees when agreed as part of an informal programme of action / monitoring and support;
- Mentoring – available to all staff colleagues upon request;
- Coaching – available to all staff colleagues upon request.

5.1 What is the difference between a mentor and a coach?

The skills to be a mentor and a coach are very similar, such as listening, effective questioning and supporting. The differences between the two are:

Mentoring will be undertaken by someone who has in-depth knowledge and of the mentee's field, and will provide both support and advice. Mentoring also provides more general support to build confidence and capabilities to meet current and future developmental needs. For this reason, mentoring will normally be a longer term relationship than coaching and may last for up to 18 months.

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Coaching will be undertaken by someone who is not necessarily an expert in the coachee's field. Coaching may be a short term intervention of a few sessions and aims to provide support to enhance performance, usually based around a particular task or objective.

6. MENTORING: SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

The coaching and mentoring relationship

All participants will operate within an equal relationship with the focus on the person being coached or mentored. The responsibility for mentoring sits with the mentee.

Responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team.

The Senior Leadership Team are encouraged to recognise the value of coaching / mentoring skills by:

- Planning for staff, who act or will act as coaches / mentors, to participate in appropriate training and receive adequate support as and when required;
- Facilitating the commitment of individuals to continuously develop their own leadership skills and capabilities;
- Taking account of the workload implications when planning the contributions of individuals as mentors or as mentoring programme co-ordinators;
- Acknowledging significant individual contributions and good practice as a mentor as an element of performance reviews for staff.

Responsibilities of the Line Manager:

- Offer the opportunity for team members to explore coaching / mentoring and advise on ways in which this can be achieved;
- Make the initial contact with a suitable coach / mentor (remembering that a staff colleague from an ethnic minority group may prefer to be coached/mentored by somebody from the same ethnic group);
- Support and encourage the coaching / mentoring relationship e.g. by allowing time for meetings to take place.
- Respect the confidential nature of the coaching / mentoring relationship.

Responsibilities of the coachee / mentee:

- Obtain agreement from the line manager to meet with the coach / mentor;
- Maintain commitment to the relationship.

Responsibilities of the coach / mentor:

- Undertake any relevant training to develop the skills to become a skilled coach / mentor;
- Maintain commitment to the relationship;
- Respect the confidential nature of the coaching / mentoring relationship.

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The SENDAT coaching / mentoring programme maps across the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) framework with an emphasis on personal and organisational capabilities. The goal of self-managed mutual learning and the need for coaching / mentoring is encouraged within the relationship as well as the desire for development in support of the School/AP and wider trust goals.

Dependent upon the context and purpose of any coaching / mentoring programme some variability in the coach / mentor role might be expected. However, fundamental principles include:

- A track record of effectively developing people;
- A genuine interest in seeing others advance;
- A wide range of current skills to pass on;
- A good understanding of the School / AP and wider Trust;
- A combination of patience and good interpersonal skills;
- Sufficient time to devote to the coaching / mentoring relationship.

The role of the coach / mentor might vary depending on the context and purpose of the mentoring program but will, in principle include:

- Taking the lead in supporting the coachee / mentee in an on-going, one-to-one mentoring relationship;
- Acting as a 'critical friend';
- Building the relationship;
- Assisting with goal setting and action planning;
- Helping the mentee towards self-management of their own learning;
- Providing the opportunity to experience at least one alternative service provision setting.

7. RELATIONSHIP OF COACHING / MENTORING TO STAFF APPRAISAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Senior Leaders must develop a supportive organisational culture where individuals can use and enhance their leadership skills. This includes empowering people working in the School / AP and wider Trust and encouraging professional autonomy, creativity, measured risk-taking and use of initiative. Also encouraging and supporting engagement in activities associated with coaching and mentoring.

Key characteristics distinguishing the role of a coach / mentor from that of a manager / supervisor are that:

- The coach / mentor has no supervisory responsibility or authority over the coachee / mentee;
- Coaches / mentors have no role in dealing with issues of non-compliance or under-performance;

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- The coaching / mentoring relationship provides a confidential, non-judgemental and non-directive environment;
- The parties to a coaching / mentoring relationship are equal within and share responsibility for the relationship;
- Mutual learning is an integral aspect of the mentoring relationship;
- The overall developmental needs of the coachee / mentee are the main focus within the coaching / mentoring relationship.

Managers and supervisors should participate in the discussion and decision to arrange a mentoring relationship for a staff member reporting to them. They have a responsibility to keep themselves informed of staff development needs as well as the availability of appropriate support mechanisms, including formal mentoring arrangements, and to transmit that information to staff.

Specific development outcomes from, or issues identified within, the mentoring relationship and may be fed into the annual review process if requested by the mentee and agreed to by the mentor.

Managers/supervisors however, have no direct role in the relationship and should not expect to receive information that is confidential to the relationship.

8. FORMAL COACHING / MENTORING ARRANGEMENTS

Formal coaching / mentoring programmes should review their design against the following principles:

- Ensure that information about the programme is equally available to all staff in the organisation covered by the programme;
- Provide a clear statement of objectives for the programme based on identified staff, organisational and or policy needs;
- Identify a champion or sponsor for the programme that will identify adequate resources and influence internal arrangements and strategies to ensure that the objectives are achievable;
- Make clear statements on the roles of and expectations for all parties;
- Encourage voluntary participation by all participants (this does not preclude prior identification of potential participants);
- Base coach / mentor selection on a list of skills that are consistent with the programme's objectives;
- Provide an induction to the programme for all coachees / mentees;
- Provide a guidance training programme for all coaches / mentors as required;
- Provide the opportunity for a rematch for participants, with a no blame policy, for relationships which do not appear to be working effectively;

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- Make adequate training and other support available for all participants, including the co-ordinator of the coaching / mentoring programme and the supervisors of mentees where appropriate;
- Design on-going monitoring and evaluation into the programme prior to implementation.

8.1. SELECTION

Criteria for coachee / mentee selection

- A commitment to continued professional development;
- Be prepared to learn, work and grow;
- Be prepared to keep appointments and maintain contact with the mentor by face-to-face/telephone/email contact.

Criteria for coach / mentor selection

- Participation in training and on-going development opportunities.
- Be prepared to keep appointments and support mentee(s) by face-to-face/Teams/telephone/e-mail contact.
- Contribution to evaluation process.

8.2. IMPLEMENTATION

Provide a central point for co-ordination of the programme.

The manager will:

- Provide training opportunities for coaches / mentors and induction for coaches / mentees;
- Recruit and select coaches / mentors and coaches / mentees
- Arrange mentor/mentee pairings:
- Monitor the programme's operation;
- Report to the Trust Leadership Group (TLG) on the programme's progress.

Individual Schools / APs will have responsibility for local programme design, implementation and evaluation. There will not be a prescriptive model of coaching / mentoring – this will be dependent on local context, culture and purpose.