

Ground Rules, Procedures and Protocols for Members of Mentoring Groups

Initial Contact

IPPN / NAPD will provide the Group Mentor with contact details of each member of the Group. In the first instance the Mentor will make contact with the Group Members by phone or by e-mail. The purpose of this is to establish contact and to arrange the first meeting

Purpose of initial Contact

During the course of this conversation the Group Mentor will outline the purpose of the first meeting, which will be

- to establish the initial relationships
- to clarify protocols and boundaries
- to look at the broad goals of the Group
- to complete a Group Mentoring Agreement form

First meeting

The Group Mentor will arrange the time and venue of the first meeting by consensus with the Members of the Group. All subsequent meeting venues and times will be discussed and agreed at the first meeting. It is not necessary that this particular meeting should last two hours. IPPN / NAPD will provide the Group Mentors with the following during this initial meeting:

- Doc 2 Ground Rules, Procedures and Protocols
- Doc 3 Group Mentoring Agreement
- Doc 5 Quality Framework for Leadership and Management
- Doc 6 Exit Strategy
- Form 1 Group Mentoring Agreement Form
- Form 2 Feedback and Topic Selection Form

Subsequent meetings

These meetings will be arranged by consensus to suit the timetables of all Group Members. At the first meeting the times and venues for these meetings should, where possible, be planned and agreed. Meetings can be scheduled for the term or for the whole year. These meetings may take place in the schools if this is the wish of the Group. It is envisaged that there be a minimum of 5 meetings in the Academic Year

Supporting Documentation

IPPN / NAPD will provide online support in the form of documents and reading materials. These will be available on the mentoring section of the IPPN / NAPD website

Conduct of meetings

The meeting should be a professional conversation based on the goals of the Group as identified by them. Group Members should make every effort to build a relationship of Trust and Respect with each other and to actively participate in the relationship. There should be frank and open communication between Group Members and confidentiality should be respected

Leading Learning

The main priority of any School Leader is to lead learning within their school. While it is acknowledged that many conversations could be centred on areas such as organisation of the school and building relationships in the community, the Group will be expected to devote some time to discussing leading learning in the school at each meeting

Contact between Group Members outside of Meetings

The Group will form a community of professionals dealing with similar issues. Group Members are encouraged to network with each other outside of Group Meetings to discuss issues of mutual concern. Such contacts should respect the core values of privacy and confidentiality as agreed by the Group

Confidentiality

It is expected that the Group will keep all their conversations confidential and will discuss what is understood by this confidentiality at their first meeting. This will involve discussing their knowledge and understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities. Issues such as what happens when they meet out socially (at conferences etc.) should be discussed

- It is understood however that if any either party to the Group Mentoring Agreement should disclose that they intend to cause grievous harm to themselves or to any other person(s) that this cannot remain confidential and will have to be reported to a specific service or agency which deals with these matters
- There may be a need for the Group Mentor to speak to their CARA about an issue that has arisen and seek advice from them. The identity of the Group Member will not be revealed to the CARA and only the specific issue will be discussed between the Group Mentor and the CARA
- Group Mentors will not discuss Group Members' issues among themselves except in the presence of their CARA at the shared learning day
- No minutes of meetings will be taken. Any written documentation created at the meeting e.g. Form 2 will only be used for the purpose intended and will be destroyed when its use expires

Responsibility

Each Group Member is entirely responsible for any decision, choices or actions they take. The Group Mentor is not responsible for any decisions, choices or actions taken by any individual Group Member

Limitations

If matters arise during the course of the conversations that appear to surpass the resource of the Group, they should be publicly acknowledged and referred to another service or agency that could deal with the particular issue and provide the support required

Where difficulties arise

IPPN / NAPD has developed an Exit Strategy Policy. If any member of the Mentoring Group feels that the process is not working for them s/he should follow the IPPN / NAPD Exit Strategy (Doc 6) and make contact with the relevant people

Closure

All Group Members are expected to participate in a closure meeting at the end of the year. At this meeting they can capitalise on what they have learned in the Mentoring relationship. The focus will be on the integration of the learning, a celebration of success and a re-definition of the relationship. Should any member be unable to continue with the Mentoring relationship (due to personal/professional circumstances) during the year, it is expected that they will still participate in this closure meeting

Evaluation of the Mentoring Programme

The IPPN / NAPD Mentoring programme is part of a pilot project. All Group Members will be requested to complete evaluation forms periodically throughout the duration of the project