



# COACHING AND MENTORING POLICY

**HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST  
AMERICAN LANE, HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE. PE29 1TQ**

## **Coaching and Mentoring Policy**

At Horizons Education Trust we are committed to developing individuals at all levels of the organisation, helping them to grow professionally and personally. There are many definitions and models of coaching, such as GROW, but we believe a coaching culture should embrace a diversity of approaches. At its heart coaching provides the skills and attitudes to encourage effective dialogue, which will enable deeper understanding, generate new thinking and lead to positive change.

We use a number of coaching and mentoring techniques in a variety of ways, both formally and informally. Our aim is to develop a coaching culture where all staff have opportunities to develop coaching skills and behaviours. Engaging in coaching and mentoring can have positive outcomes for both parties in the process.

### **Developing a Coaching Culture**

There are many definitions of a coaching culture. Hart (2003) describes it as 'An organizational setting in which not only formal coaching occurs, but also, most or a large segment of individuals in the organization practice coaching behaviours as a means of relating to, influencing and supporting others'. Hardingham (2004) describes 'A culture where people coach each other all the time as a natural part of meetings, reviews and one to one discussions of all kinds'. Jones and Gorell (2014) believe it is where 'people are empowered and where coaching happens at every level.....It is the recognized tool that touches every part of the employee life-cycle'.

The key element in developing a coaching culture is the idea that it happens at every level of the organisation and that everyone can be involved as coach and coachee. Horizons Education Trust and its schools is committed to developing a coaching culture where coaching approaches are used to solve problems, including when working with pupils, parents and stakeholders as well as staff.

Clutterbuck, Megginson and Bajer (2016) talk of the principles necessary for a coaching culture to be developed: Attentiveness, Collaboration, Curiosity, Ethicality, Growth, Openness and Honesty, Reflection, Respect.

At Horizons Education Trust and its schools we want to develop an environment where the above principles are underpinned by behaviours, where people:

- engage in dialogue when people face difficulties or challenges to help them think through the choices and options
- get involved in the process of enquiry and exploration to identify the best possible solution to a problem
- support, but also challenge team members with the aim of helping them grow and develop
- frequently provide and seek feedback, seeing it as an opportunity to improve
- actively listen to each other to support understanding and insight
- enquire about counterpart's concerns and needs
- admit mistakes and learn from them

- suspend assumptions and judgement and freely engage with other’s thinking
- openly admit to a lack of skill or knowledge and ask for help
- express opinions with openness and honesty
- take time to reflect

**The Difference between Coaching and Mentoring:**

The terms coaching and mentoring are often used interchangeably but they serve different purposes.

- Mentoring is a sustained process for supporting professional learners through significant career transitions
- Coaching is a process for enabling the development of a specific aspect of a professional learner’s practice.

| Coaching                                                                                                                                                           | Mentoring                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Usually focused on professional dialogue designed to aid the coachee in development of specific professional skills to enhance their work.                         | Usually takes place at significant career events, such as to support induction or taking on new professional roles. |
| Coaches are not normally in positions of line management in relation to their coachee.                                                                             | Mentor is generally someone more senior in an organisation.                                                         |
| Coaching is not generally linked to a career transition although it could be.                                                                                      | There is often an organizational motive for the process.                                                            |
| The focus of the coaching is usually selected by the coachee and the process provides opportunities for reflection and problem solving for both coach and coachee. | There is often a requirement for the mentor to provide documentary evidence of the process and its outcome.         |

**When do Coaching and Mentoring take place?**

Coaching and mentoring are integral to professional development in both formal and informal ways.

At Horizons Education Trust and its schools, all staff follow an induction programme on starting at the school. They will be allocated a mentor who supports them through the induction process. The mentor will be a more experienced, generally more senior member of staff. The mentor and mentee should have regular meetings to discuss progress through the induction process. Any issues should be identified early and passed to a member of the Senior Management Team. Once the induction period is complete, it is expected that the mentor will continue to offer support as required.

All Newly Qualified Teachers (ECT) have a mentor assigned who follow a rigorous, externally moderated ECT programme. The ECT process is overseen by an induction coordinator. During the second year of teaching the recently qualified teacher will continue to be supported.

Mentors will also be assigned to support staff taking on new roles within the school, such as a new management post or accountability.

Coaching is offered for professional and personal development, often identified through the appraisal process. A member of the coaching team will support the member of staff through a programme for a time limited period to focus on a specific area of development. Coaching is also likely to be used during any capability process.

Coaching can be used for groups or teams, who may be identified as requiring support to improve how they are functioning.

Informally we encourage all staff to use a coaching style to problem solving, which encourages coachees to work through problems and think of answers for themselves, through developmental conversations

### **Developing coaching and mentoring skills**

At Horizons Education Trust and its schools the Coaching and Mentoring Lead will work with groups of staff to develop coaching and mentoring skills and attitudes. Staff will have opportunities to practice these skills in a safe environment, with supportive colleagues.

Although it is hoped that all staff will be able to acquire many of these skills, those who wish to develop this role further and who have the necessary skills and attitudes will be identified in order to set up a team of coaches and mentors, who can be used for specific coaching and mentoring tasks. These coaches and mentors should represent a variety of roles within the organisation.

Some examples of the skills required are:

- listening effectively
- establishing trust
- summarizing and paraphrasing
- giving feedback
- questioning
- setting expectations
- identifying outcomes and clarifying goals
- building relationships
- enabling insight and learning
- use of coaching and mentoring models and techniques
- observing

Before undertaking any coaching and mentoring task, members of the team will meet with the coaching and mentoring lead to establish goals and set parameters.

Coaches and mentors should have access to regular supervision and continuing professional development.

### **References:**

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