

**Y10 and 11 business
and industry
mentoring project**

THE MENTORING PROJECT

Background

A multi-agency approach is one of the key features of the SRB:RAEE Project. At Rhyddings, the involvement of people from business and industry is a key feature of the SRB Project in Years 10 and 11. Currently we have the services of six mentors from a variety of backgrounds who see their student/s once every two or three weeks.

They are:

Tom Bond	TDS (North West) Limited, Rawtenstall
Kathy Cook	Palgrave Brown (UK)
Roland Ogilvie	Retired
Phil Pickering	Harmsworth Towneley Riveting Systems
Sergio Solazzo	Sergio's Italian Hairdresser
Vicky Spokes	Jigsaw Partnership

Mentor recruitment

Mentors are recruited through either EBP or the school. Those mentors who have been recruited through the school have been personal contacts recommended by Staff. When recommended, mentors are contacted by the SRB Co-ordinator who explains the SRB Project to them and what mentoring involves. If they are willing to join the Project their names are forwarded to Jason Tattersall at EBP who sends them further details regarding mentoring and also forms for them to fill in so that Police clearance can be gained.

Mentor induction

When clearance has been given, mentors are invited in by the SRB Co-ordinator, either singly or in small groups. Here they are shown round the school and meet one or more members of the Senior Management. If possible, mentors also meet their student's form tutor. If this latter is not possible then an arrangement can be made for a meeting at a later date.

In either the Conference Room (where mentor group meetings are held) or the mentors' room at the top of East Block (where their meetings with students take place) the Project is explained to the mentors in more detail and they have the opportunity to discuss it with Simon Midgley and ask any questions they may have.

The procedures to follow when meeting their student are explained to them: matters like who to contact in school, how to contact their student, where to meet their student and so on. All of this and other necessary information is contained in the Mentors' Handbook which each mentor is given. This handbook is updated each year to reflect changes such as school staffing, rooms and time-tabling.

At this first meeting they don't usually meet their student but if they wish to this is arranged.

The next step is to arrange the first meeting with their student once a pairing has been identified and agreed. This procedure is described in the sections below on mentor-student pairing and mentor meetings.

Student Enrolment

At the start of Year 10, SRB students are asked if they wish to take part in the SRB Business and Industry mentoring scheme. The benefits of this are outlined to them and if they wish to speak to a student who is already being mentored in Y11 this is arranged.

If the student expresses an interest a brochure and letter are sent home explaining the scheme to their parents. Parents are invited to contact the SRB Co-ordinator (Simon Midgley), by letter, phone or email, should they need any further information. If they agree to their child being included on the Project they sign and return a permission slip.

Mentor - Student pairing

The next task is for the SRB Co-ordinator to pair the student with a mentor. Student interests and barriers to learning are taken into account when setting up the pairing as well as mentor and student personalities, gender and ethnicity.

When a mentor is provisionally identified they are given background information on the student and asked if they are willing to act as mentor to them.

When a mentor agrees to a pairing the student is informed and a first meeting is arranged by the SRB Co-ordinator in collaboration with the mentor and student. This first meeting, during school time, is to allow the mentor and student to assess if they are likely to be able to form a good, mentoring relationship.

If mentor and student agree to continue meeting a letter is sent home to inform parents who will be working with their child, and the

mentor is provided with further, more detailed information on the student contained in that student's IDP. A meeting with the student's form tutor or a particular subject teacher may be set up if the mentor feels this would help them with the mentoring process.

Mentor - student meetings

Location

These normally take place in the Mentors' Room at the top of East block. This has been refurbished to provide a comfortable and relaxing environment to help reinforce the more adult and business-like nature of the mentoring process. Refreshments are available in the room.

Timing

Meetings between mentor and student are usually every two to three weeks, although some mentors prefer to meet more regularly for the first few meetings. Sessions take place during normal lesson time but mentors try to vary times of meetings so as not to affect the same lesson each time. Each session lasts for between 30 minutes and one hour.

The dates and times of meetings are entered in an appointment folder kept in the Mentors' Room and can also be entered in the on-line calendar in the Rhyddings High virtual mentors' centre. Appointment cards are given to students with the time and date of the next meeting on them. These validate students being allowed out of lessons.

Content of meetings

The mentor and SRB Co-ordinator will have discussed the particular barriers to achievement which a particular student has and what could usefully be discussed during mentoring meetings. The actual content of the mentoring sessions is left to the mentor themselves who will develop it to suit their individual student. In general terms, sessions are likely to focus on what a student can be doing now to raise their achievement in school and to increase their chances of getting on a suitable course or obtaining an appropriate job when leaving school.

Individual mentors may set either short-term or longer-term targets for students to achieve

Feedback

Mentors provide feedback on what is happening during mentoring sessions to the SRB Co-ordinator. This feedback ideally takes place immediately after the meeting, or, immediately before the next meeting. Additionally, the SRB Co-ordinator may contact the mentor by phone or email later if this is felt necessary. Feedback is also received during the regular mentors' meetings which take place each half-term.

After mentors' discussion of the issue, formal records of meetings with students are not kept as mentors have expressed the feeling that this would detract from the informal nature of the mentor - student relationship. The aim of the mentoring relationship is to be unlike other school-based adult-student relationships. Most mentors do keep informal notes of what has happened in sessions to help them plan the next session.

SRB Mentoring Project Meetings

These meetings are held once per half-term subject to mentors' commitments.

The meetings are convened by the SRB Mentoring Co-ordinator (Simon Midgley) who sends an agenda to all mentors, the SRB East Lancs Education Business Partnerships contact (Jason Tattersall) and the Deputy Head with oversight of the SRB Project (Paul Trickett).

The date and time of the meeting is also displayed in the Rhyddings High virtual mentors centre on the Web (see the section on VMC below).

Minutes from the meetings are distributed to all those invited to the meeting either by post or email.

Rhyddings High School virtual mentors centre (VMC)

An area exists on-line for those mentors who have access to the Web. It is a private area accessible only by invitation. All mentors are eligible to join as are staff in school with a need to know mentoring arrangements. This effectively means all staff and is an area for development noted in the SRB Development Plan.

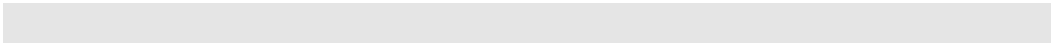
The main purpose of the VMC is to allow easy access to a calendar detailing mentor-student meetings and the SRB mentoring scheme meetings noted above. The Calendar also contains information extracted from the school calendar such as

dates of school terms and when examinations are (e.g.GCSE, SATs and CATs).

Evaluation

Mentors and students complete mentoring evaluation forms towards the end of Y11. There are two sets of forms: one set from ELEBP for their evaluation of the scheme and one set from Rhyddings High to help them evaluate and improve the mentoring scheme.

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EVALUATION OF THE MENTORING PROJECT SO FAR

Mentoring is one of the strategies employed at Rhyddings by the SRB Raising Achievement - Enhancing Employability project.

The academic year 1998-99 saw the first SRB students to graduate who had had been part of the SRB mentoring project. In the 18 months the mentoring project has been running it has become an established feature of our work with students.

As noted above there are now six mentors involved in the Project. In the last year, three mentors left for reasons unconnected with the Project and two new mentors have joined.

Systems are now in place to induct new members and provide them with guidance.

Communication between mentors, student and co-ordinator were an issue to be resolved initially. Communication routines now exist with Simon Midgley, the SRB co-ordinator playing a key part. Where a mentor has email this is the preferred route for communication.

Regular meetings between mentors are a pivotal part of this communication. Once a half-term seems to be a suitable interval.

The acquisition and refurbishment of a room in school where mentors could meet their students has also played an important part in helping the mentoring process succeed. This refurbishment has been a joint venture between SRB, Careers and EMAG staff who now all share the room which can be booked via an appointment folder kept in the room.

Email has played a part in maintaining communication and is an area for development as more mentors come on-line. It has also been a method of reaching our contact at EBP, Jason Tattersall, who is often unavailable by other methods.

The creation of an area on the Web where mentors can exchange information, read messages about the school and add appointments to an on-line calendar is a recent development which should be taken further next year.

Barriers to the mentoring project

As well as the successes noted above there have been issues in the first year of the mentoring project which have slowed or blocked development.

- The problem with finding a suitable room held up progress until the current room was acquired just before Easter, 1999.
- Lack of regular meetings in the first six months of the Project also hampered development. This has now been resolved.
- Mentors commented on initial difficulties in contacting the SRB co-ordinator. Email and the creation of the Virtual Mentors Centre are helping to minimise this
- Withdrawing students from normal lessons for mentoring is a concern with some staff. Mentors have responded to this by trying to vary the times at which they meet with students so that the same lesson is not affected each week or fortnight, but as meetings are only once a fortnight or three weeks then this should not be a major issue.
- Refreshments are an aid to the mentoring process but initially were difficult to provide. Now mentors have a base to work from this is less of an issue.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

- The Virtual Mentors' Centre should be further developed as more mentors come on-line. It already includes links to other mentoring resources and these should be added to by both the co-ordinator and members of the VMC.
- All staff at school should be invited to join the VMC so that they can access up-to-date information about the Project. As the ICT resources and NGfL are developed within the school staff will be able to access the area more easily within school as well as from home.
- The mentors' room refurbishment should be completed with new refreshment facilities including a fridge.
- Mentoring should begin earlier in Y10 than at present. This is conditional on recruiting enough mentors.
- More mentors should be recruited.

- Consideration should be given to extending the mentoring programme to Y9 SRB students with the possibility of using Y11 students as peer mentors.