

Newcastle Waldorf School Portfolio & Presentation Mentoring Handbook

Dear Mentors,

Thank you for volunteering to act as mentor to one of our students. Mentors play a vital role in the Portfolio and Presentation (P&P) course by helping the student develop greater connectivity with the wider community especially in the field of their chosen interest. As well, they provide expertise, insight and specific knowledge that students may otherwise find difficult to obtain.

Role of the Mentor

As a mentor, your primary role is to provide guidance and support to your mentee based on his or her unique developmental needs. At different points in the relationship, you will take on some or all of the following roles:

Coach/Advisor

- Give advice and guidance, share ideas, and provide feedback
- Share hints and tips that would be otherwise hard to obtain.
- Guide the student through problem solving while avoiding solving the problem for them.

Source of Encouragement/Support

- Act as a sounding board for ideas and concerns about their project
- Provide insights into possible opportunities
- Provide support to help them realise their ideas.

Resource Person

- Help students identify appropriate resources.

Devil's Advocate

- When appropriate, play devil's advocate to help mentee think through important decisions and strategies.

Role of the Mentee

Communication

- Identify skills knowledge and goals that you wish to achieve and communicate them with your mentor.
- Bring up new ideas and topics that are important to you and give feedback to your mentor.

Planning

- Maintain a mentoring plan. Know what you want to get out of the relationship, set meetings and dates and develop goals and timeframes to share with your mentor.

Resources

- Don't rely on your mentor. Do your own research. Identify your own sources, then share and discuss with your mentor.

Reciprocating

- Look for opportunities to give back to your mentor. Share any information that you think might be valuable. Offer to help out.

Student Welfare

To fulfil our legal responsibilities surrounding student welfare we ask that you read through the Code of Conduct for P&P mentors, NWS Child Protection Policy (attached separately) and complete a Working with Children Check as outlined below.

Working with Children Check

To be a mentor you need to complete a Working with Children Check (WWCC). This is standard policy for all organisations that work in some capacity with people under the age of 18.

The steps you need to follow are outlined below. This needs to be completed before any one-on-one student contact. If you wish to get started before the check is processed then it may be possible to meet with your student accompanied by their parent or guardian.

Step 1:

- Got to the WWCC website
- <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/Working-with-children/working-with-children-check>
- Click on "volunteers and students" tab in the left hand menu
- Click on "Apply for Check"
- Complete and submit form
- Record your application number

Step 2

- Take your application number and proof of identification to a NSW motor registry or Services NSW office. Proof of ID is the same as for obtaining a drivers licence. A current drivers licence is sufficient however if you don't have that see the following page for a list
- <http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/roads/licence/identity/index.html>

Step 3

- When you receive notification of a successful check, email the School or Jeremy with your WWCC number, surname and date of birth.

School Policy and Procedure

All Mentors will be provided with a copy of the **NWS (Newcastle Waldorf School) Child Protection Policy**. As volunteers of the school they are bound by this policy.

The **NWS Code of Conduct** informs an employee of the conduct that helps them to comply with the child protection policy and the ethos of the school. Many of the sections of this code, however, are not applicable to mentors (they being off-site volunteers); so a modified, applicable version is included here.

NWS Code of Conduct for P&P Mentors

The aim of this *Code* is to outline the standards of behaviour expected of all P&P mentors of the School. It sets out general expectations of the standards of behaviour required.

By accepting to be a mentor, you must be aware of and comply with this *Code*.

Therefore, you must:

- (a) conduct yourself, both personally and professionally in a manner that upholds the ethos and reputation of the School;
- (b) comply with the School's policies and procedures;
- (c) act ethically and responsibly; and
- (d) be accountable for your actions and decisions.

This *Code* is not intended to be contractual in nature and does not impose any contractual obligations on the School. The School reserves the right at its sole discretion to vary or cancel this *Code* at any time.

1. Mentor Expectations

As a mentor you are expected to:

- a) perform your duties to the best of your ability
- b) comply with lawful directions;
- c) carry out your duties in a professional, competent and conscientious manner
- d) act honestly and in good faith in fulfilling your duties;
- e) communicate effectively with parents and the school in formal and informal situations so that the welfare of students becomes a matter of mutual agreement and mutual trust.
- f) develop, in consultation with the course coordinator, strategies for dealing with situations in which the behaviour of individual students becomes a matter of concern.

2. Required Reporting

- 2.1 All employees, contractors, volunteers and mentors are required to inform a Co-Principal if they are charged with or convicted of a serious offence (those punishable by 12 months or more in jail). You must also inform a Co-Principal if you become the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order.

- 2.2 If, through your engagement with the School, you become aware of a serious crime committed by another person within the school community, you are required to report it to a Co-Principal, who will inform the police.
- 2.3 As a School employee, contractor volunteer or mentor, you must report to a Co-Principal:
- (a) any concerns that you may have about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person from the school;
 - (b) any concerns you may have about the inappropriate actions of any other employee, contractor, volunteer or mentor that involves children or young people;
 - (c) any concerns you may have about any other employee, contractor, mentor or volunteer engaging in 'reportable conduct' (as defined in the NWS Child Protection Policy) or any allegation of 'reportable conduct' that has been made to you; and
 - (d) if you become aware that an employee, contractor, mentor or volunteer has been charged with or convicted of an offence (including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction) involving 'reportable conduct'; and
 - (e) if you become the subject of allegations of 'reportable conduct' whether or not they relate to your employment in the School.
 - (f) if your Working With Children Check clearance is cancelled or if you are or become a *disqualified*¹ person from working or volunteering with children.

You should refer to the School's Child Protection Policy for further information about these obligations.

3. Other Conduct

Mentors who work with students have the responsibility in presenting themselves as appropriate role models for those students. Modelling effective leadership and respect in your interactions with students can have a profoundly positive influence on a student's personal and social development.

As a mentor, you have a duty of care to students in your charge. That duty is to take all reasonable steps to protect students from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted. For example, risks from known hazards and from foreseeable risk situations against which preventative measures can be taken. The standard of care that is required, for example the degree of supervision, needs to be commensurate with the students' maturity and ability.

Duty of care to students applies during all activities and functions conducted or arranged by the School. The risks associated with any activity need to be assessed and managed before the activity is undertaken.

You should take all reasonable steps to ensure that no student is exposed to any unnecessary risk of injury.

4. Professional relationships between employees and students

- 4.1 It is part of the mentoring process for a student to visit you at your place of work, which might also be your home. It will be unreasonable to expect that you avoid situations where you are

¹ As defined in the NSW Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 Section 18

alone in an enclosed space with a student, so you should, if possible take the following precautions to avoid putting yourself or the student in a vulnerable situation:

- a) allow easy student access in and out of the area that you are using.
- b) Leave doors open where possible
- c) Seek parent permission before driving a student anywhere in your car
- d) If you need to have a conversation with a student that you feel might be sensitive in any way, involve the student's parent or a member of staff from the school
- e) Always consider the balance of power between mentor and student in any situation.
- f) You must not impose physical punishment on a student.
- g) When congratulating a student, a handshake, pat on the shoulder or brief hug are acceptable as long as the student is comfortable with this action. Kissing of students is not acceptable.

4.2 You must not have a romantic or sexual relationship with a student. It is irrelevant whether the relationship is homosexual or heterosexual, consensual or non-consensual or condoned by parents or caregivers. You are reminded of:

- (a) the law prohibiting sexual relations with a person under the age of consent (16 years); and
- (b) the law prohibiting sexual relations between a teacher and their student under the age of 18 years.

4.3 You must not develop a relationship with any student that is, or that can be interpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student. An overly familiar relationship with any student (including any adult student) that you are responsible for teaching, tutoring, advising, assessing, or for whom you provide pastoral or welfare support raises serious questions of conflict of interest, trust, confidence, dependency, and of equality of treatment.

4.4 If you consider that a student is being overly familiar, seeking to establish a personal relationship with you or has developed a 'crush' on you, you should report your concerns to the School as soon as possible so that a plan can be developed to manage the situation effectively and sensitively.

4.5 At all times when speaking with students care must be taken to use appropriate language. You must always treat students with respect and without favouritism. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments.

4.6 You may, as part of your pastoral care role, engage in discussion with students. This is entirely appropriate. However you must be cautious about making personal comments about a student or asking questions that probe your own or a student's sexuality or relationships. You must not hold conversations with a student of an intimately personal nature where you disclose information about yourself.

5. Appropriate use of electronic communication and social networking sites

5.1 You must:

- (a) exercise good judgment when using electronic mail, following the principles of ethical behaviour;
- (b) use appropriate and professional language in electronic mail messages;

- (c) be aware that if an issue addressed in an email becomes the subject of a legal dispute, then those emails would be discoverable: that is, the court and all parties to the dispute would be entitled to see them;
- (d) not send messages that are harassing, discriminatory, defamatory, threatening, abusive or obscene;
- (e) use caution if inviting students into your personal social networking site or accept an invitation to theirs;
- (f) remember transmission, storage, promotion or display of offensive, defamatory, or harassing material is strictly forbidden; and
- (g) report any situations where you become aware of the inappropriate use of electronic communication and social networking sites.
- (h) where possible, cc students *and* parents in any email correspondence.

6. Use of Alcohol, drugs and tobacco

You must not:

- (a) give students or other employees illegal drugs or restricted substances, or encourage or condone their use; and
- (b) supply or administer prescription or non-prescription drugs to students unless authorised to do so.
- (c) purchase alcohol for, or give alcohol to, any School student (or to any other person under the age of 18 years); and
- (d) encourage or condone the use of alcohol by students of any age during educational activities.
- (e) purchase tobacco or tobacco products for any School student, or give them tobacco or tobacco products.

WHS, Insurance and Liability

WHS is a shared responsibility. The School expects students to behave in a way that is compliant with relevant WHS legislation and practices. They will need your help and guidance to do this in their chosen field of study. Please contact Jeremy if you believe students are neglecting this responsibility despite being guided by you.

The Schools insurer has provided the following statement regarding coverage of the mentoring program:

Newcastle Waldorf School has in place a Student Personal Accident - Gold Policy, which is designed to cover students of the school whilst they are actually engaged in "School Activity".

"School Activity" means the time on a 24 hours per week, 7 days per week basis that the student is engaged in activities in any way connected with Newcastle Waldorf School, including but not limited

to all extra - curricular activities, academic, sporting, cultural or artistic activities, work experience or vocational training at all locations worldwide including all associated travel to and from such activities.

In summary, should the mentoring program of the students be a school activity which has been authorised as part of their course curriculum, then the Students will be covered under the current Student Personal Accident Policy.

Additionally, if the Students actually cause damage to third party property or cause personal injury to third party, then this is also covered under the Newcastle Waldorf School's Combined Public & Products Liability.

Summary of things to do

- Get a Working with Children Check and supply your number, surname and date of birth to the School
- Read the NWS Child Protection Policy
- Read the summary of the code of conduct included in this booklet
- Provide the School with a written or emailed acknowledgement that you have read and agree to the above two policies

Communication with the School

Please contact the school whenever necessary to discuss anything related to the mentoring program.

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