

The Learning Mentors at Lewes New School

Who are the Learning Mentors?

1. All Learning Mentors at LNS are volunteers. They are parents of children attending school, volunteers from the community or professional people known to the school.
2. All Learning Mentors will complete the Learning Mentor Basic training programme before they can undertake any work with children.
3. The Learning Mentor Team, in conjunction with the Head Teacher, can turn down an application if they feel that the volunteer is not able to meet the responsibilities set out in the Job Description or the skills listed in the Key Skills requirements.
4. All the Learning Mentors are supported in their work by a Peer Buddy System, weekly meetings and through outside supervision by an Independent Consultant.
5. All Learning Mentors have a DBS Disclosure (formerly CRB) in place.

Where are the Learning Mentors Based?

1. Learning Mentors are based within Lewes New School.
2. Learning Mentors work with children in a variety of places depending on the focus of the work. This may include working alongside them within a group, individually, or within a class. The majority of the work will happen within school however there is the flexibility to work with children off site. If Learning Mentors work off-site with children then a risk assessment is completed and signed by the Head Teacher.

What kind of things does a Learning Mentor do?

1. The focus of the Learning Mentor role is to implement strategies to support or develop an area of learning for a child attending LNS.
2. Learning Mentors may support children to engage and develop their ELLI profile.
3. Learning Mentors act as role models and 'professional friends' for children and focus on the enrichment of learning for children at LNS.
4. Learning Mentors devise an individual programme with the child they are working with to support or develop the focus they have chosen.

What qualifications or training does a Learning Mentor need to have?

1. Learning Mentors are welcomed from all members of the community. An interest in supporting children to achieve their full potential, being open and non judgemental and understanding the importance of confidentiality are the most important criteria.

2. All Learning Mentors will have undertaken the Learning Mentor Training devised and delivered by professionals agreed by the school community.

How does a child get to work with a Learning Mentor?

1. Children get to work with Learning Mentors in a variety of ways. These can include a child requesting to work with one; parents requesting their child has support or the opportunity to develop an area further; a member of staff suggesting a child works with a Learning Mentor to develop a skill further, explore their ELLI Learning Profile in more detail or as a way of extending an aspect of interest or learning within a 1:1 situation.
2. Once a request has been made, the Learning Mentor Co-ordinator will make contact with the child's parents and seek their initial permission for the Co-ordinator to liaise with the child and look at the possibilities of working with a Learning Mentor. If both parents and child agree then the child will be introduced to their Learning Mentor and the individual programme put together. This individual programme will set out the focus of the work, the targets that they wish to achieve and how this might be undertaken. The Learning Mentor and the child will then meet with the parents to share this. Both the child and the parent will be invited to agree to this 'contract of work'.
3. Once the individual programme is written and agreed, the child and the Learning Mentor will start work. Their pattern of work will be flexible. At least one weekly session will be expected of approximately 40/60 min depending on the focus of the work and the age of the child. For some children 2 sessions of 30 min might be more appropriate. This will be recorded in the initial contract.
4. Each piece of work will have a time allocation. This will vary again depending on focus and age but will be written into the individual contract at the beginning. There will be a Review of Work at approximately the half way stage, where the child will be encouraged to invite the parents into school to share what they have been doing.
5. At the end of the individual programme the child and Learning Mentor will review the work undertaken. It is hoped that this review will again be shared with the parent. To acknowledge and celebrate the work that the Learning Mentor and child have shared there will be a closing session that is planned by the Learning Mentor and the child together and will culminate in a chosen form of acknowledgement. This may be achieved in a range of ways depending on the work but could culminate in a celebration outing, walk in the park or exhibition of work.

How long does the Learning Mentor work with a child?

1. The Learning Mentor and child will discuss the focus of the work during their first meeting and plan what might be done. At this point the Learning Mentor will be able to decide the length of time needed. This plan will then be shared with the parents by the child and the Learning Mentor and agreed.

2. The time allocated to achieve the targets set out in the original meeting will be approximately 6 -12 weeks.
3. If after the work is completed the child parent or teachers wish further work to be explored or undertaken then another request can be made to the Learning Mentors Team.

What does the Learning Mentor do with the children they work with?

1. The work carried out by the Learning Mentor and child will depend on the focus of the work being requested. If the focus was to explore and expand the child's ELLI profile with a particular focus on using their strength in learning relationships to support the growth of creativity and critical curiosity then the Learning Mentor might design a programme of work to undertake together focused on a project that the child had a particular interest in. Within this piece of work both the Learning Mentor and the child might look at the topic, exploring what they know already and what they would like to know, and how they might find this out, where to go, who to ask or talk to and what books to read.
2. If a different child had asked to work with the Learning Mentor because they had become rather stuck in their maths and wanted some one to one quiet time to work things out with someone, then the Learning Mentor and the child might plan the work around the area of maths in question. They would explore it in a practical and fun way and then perhaps devise a game to play with other children as the final session.

How are parents involved with the work a Learning Mentor does?

1. Parents can be involved with the work their child undertakes with Learning Mentors at particular stages: the initial meeting to give permission for their child to work with the Learning Mentor; the sharing of the contract setting out the work to be undertaken; the review of the work that will happen at the half way point; and a final session and sharing of the work achieved.

What happens if a child or the parents do not want a Learning Mentor working with them?

1. A Learning Mentor will only undertake a piece of work with a child if:
 - it has been requested by a child, parent or member of staff;
 - the parent has given permission for the work to be explored with the child;
 - the child has requested or agreed to the work being suggested.