

## Mentoring Pupils

A mentor is an independent, unbiased adult (usually a volunteer from the business world) who meets a young person on a regular basis and takes a personal interest in them. Young people who lack parental support or need encouragement to raise their ambitions and gain confidence particularly benefit from participation in a mentoring programme. Acting as a role model, the mentor helps the pupil to think about what they might aim for both at school and beyond. Mentor meetings normally take place on school premises and typically are arranged on a fortnightly basis.

### BENEFITS FOR PUPILS

- Provides an adult friend or 'buddy' to talk about worries or concerns.
- Helps pupils to understand the importance of routine, discipline and timekeeping in adult life.
- Can lead to improved attendance and punctuality and the development of positive attitudes to school in young people who are marginally underachieving.
- Young people become more motivated and relate to school standards and the curriculum.
- Having a role model unconnected with education brings relevance to school work.
- Provides a focused means of making strong contacts in the business community.

### BENEFITS FOR BUSINESS

- Staff involved in mentoring are likely to become better motivated and more sensitive to the needs of others.
- Mentors develop a range of new skills (for example, communication, leadership, counselling, problem-solving and interpersonal skills) which can be of value back in the workplace.
- Provides the opportunity for positive public relations for supporting companies and organisations.
- Puts something back into the community.

### ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES FOR SCHOOLS

- Need to identify pupils who would benefit most from the mentoring programme.
- Requirement to liaise with parents, other teachers and the pupils themselves.
- Recruitment and training of mentors must be considered — support is available from Edinburgh Compact.
- Administration of mentor visits to school is critical. It is advisable to nominate a member of staff to deal with mentor contacts.
- Provide profiles of pupils for mentors, and have regular discussions with mentors and participating pupils on progress.

### COMMITMENT REQUIRED FROM COMPANIES

- Following training, mentors should be prepared to devote time to the mentoring process, over an extended period. This requires the approval of the company, particularly if it involves visiting schools during normal working hours.

### RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- It is advisable to nominate a member of staff within the school to deal with all aspects of mentoring.
- Organisational issues related to mentoring need to be dealt with (eg providing information to the mentor, finding a suitable meeting room or area, etc).
- Regular contact with pupils and mentors during the programme is desirable.
- Attendance at training sessions and other meetings is necessary.

### CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION