

POLICY FOR THE MENTORING FOR NEW GOVERNORS

Author: Clerk (JGEA) January 2018
Approved by Corporation: 14 March 2019

INTRODUCTION

Newly appointed governors should be given the opportunity to be paired with an experienced governor to ease the new governor into the role by helping them navigate through the mass of new jargon, terminology, structures and procedures. There are no prescribed activities and some new governors will require more support than other governors.

PURPOSE

The aim of this policy is to advise on the mentoring arrangements available for new governors at the Henley College as effective mentoring makes an important contribution to a new Governor's capability to contribute to the work of the Governing Body and to enjoy the role.

New governors will meet individually the Chair, Principal and Clerk who will each talk about the partnership between the Principal, the College and governing body providing background information on the College and any current issues. This will allow new governors to ask questions about their role and/or the College.

PROCEDURE

On appointment of a new Governor, the Corporation will identify a 'mentor'.

The role of the Mentor will supplement the advice and support given by the Chair of Governors, Chairs of Committees, Principal and Clerk.

The Mentor will:

- offer to meet with the new Governor when they are appointed or prior to his / her first Board meeting to go through the agenda
- sit with the new Governor at his / her first Board meeting
- be available thereafter, as a sounding board and someone to whom the new Governor can refer to for help and advice
- continue the relationship for a suggested twelve months, (unless otherwise agreed between the Mentor and new Governor)
- be a good listener and encourage the new governor to identify approaches to adopt in certain situations. The mentor is not required to train the new governor or to provide explicit instructions on how to behave or act in particular circumstances.

In the event that the Mentor will not be at the first meeting attended by the new Governor, the Chair of Governors / Chair of the Committee will make contact with the new Governor in advance of the meeting.

PRACTICE

New Governors will be allocated a volunteer Mentor from amongst the more experienced Governors, agreed by the Chair of Governors in consultation with the Clerk and with the agreement of the proposed Mentor.

The Clerk will provide contact details for the two individuals who would then enter into an informal support arrangement.

The mentoring arrangements will remain informal. Should, at any time, either party not wish to continue the arrangement, this is to be agreed between the Mentor and the new Governor. Should the new Governor wish to seek the support of another Mentor, they would contact the Clerk in the first instance, who in consultation with the Chair will seek to appoint a new Mentor, if appropriate.

Exactly how long the new Governor would require a Mentor would vary in individual cases, and would largely depend upon their prior knowledge of the College and /or the Further and Higher Education Sector. However, mentoring would last for about 12 months, or for as long as each partner felt it was needed. If during this time, the experienced Governor's participation ceased for whatever reason, then another could be nominated if required.

THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR

The essence of the mentoring relationship is that an experienced Governor would make him/herself available to assist a new colleague to quickly develop the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their role, and together agree some clear objectives.

The Mentor needs to be a friendly face and provide personal support to help the Mentee navigate through the terminology in the board papers.

The Mentor should contact the new Governor when the board papers are sent out in order to go through the pack, answer questions and if necessary draw attention to key issues and background. It is important that the Mentee understands they do not have to master all the detail in the pack, but use the summary cover sheets to understand the content of the papers and the key recommendations, if any.

If possible, it is recommended that the Mentor and Mentee meet, prior to the board meeting and sit together at the meeting. The use of acronyms should be avoided and Chairs of meetings should take time to explain any abbreviations or jargon and, on occasions, a very brief background explanation to what is being discussed.

The Mentor is not required to "train" the new Governor or to provide explicit instructions on how to behave in specific circumstances. The aim is to informally encourage their Mentee and help them to comprehend the context of the Governing Board as well as the College itself by providing an appropriate level of support. It would be entirely appropriate for the Mentor to answer factual questions and to direct the new Governor to other valuable sources of information for example the Clerk or a member of the Senior Leadership team.

During the first 6 months, it is important that the Mentor actively tries to identify issues where the new Governor needs further clarification, information and training, some of these issues may be addressed by the Mentor and others referred to the Clerk.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Clerk will oversee the mentoring arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governance & Search Committee every three years.