

1. Introduction

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the structure and framework for the Senior Programme is fair, transparent and equitable and that the programme delivers impact and value for money. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant Kids on Track policies which can be found on the website (www.kidsontrack.org.uk).

2. Overview of Senior Programme

The Senior Programme will be for all children who have graduated from the Junior Programme at the end of Year 7 and have engaged fully with Kids on Track.

The Senior Programme is a multi-tiered structure managed by the Senior Programme Co-ordinator:

1. Mentoring: children who are particularly vulnerable will be matched in a one-on-one relationship with a mentor, developing trust through simple shared activities. This relationship is managed by the mentor with the engagement of the parent or carer.
2. Life Skills Workshops: A series of workshops available to all on the Senior Programme.
3. Developing cultural capital and broadening horizons for all on the Senior programme.
4. After-school activities: a range of clubs to develop skills in sports, arts, cookery etc, available to all on the Senior Programme
5. Residential trips: available to all on the Senior Programme to develop their confidence and independence.

All these elements are planned to work in conjunction so that each child will develop the confidence, resilience and self-belief to fulfil their own potential.

The Senior Programme aims:

1. To develop cultural capital
2. To build self-esteem
3. To develop self-efficacy

2.1 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is a sociological theory that refers to the various kinds of knowledge, skills and behaviour acquired through upbringing. This facilitates social mobility through knowledge of arts, theatre, history, language. Our aim is to widen the experiences the children / young people are exposed to and therefore give them a better foundation for learning at school, an improved sense of belonging to the local community and raised aspirations.

2.2 Self Esteem

Self-esteem is how we value and perceive ourselves. It is based on our opinions and beliefs about ourselves. It can affect whether a person:

- likes and values themselves as a person

- is able to make decisions and assert themselves
- can recognise their strengths and abilities
- feels able to try new or difficult things
- shows kindness towards themselves
- can move past mistakes without blaming themselves unfairly
- believes they matter and are good enough
- believes they deserve happiness.

Through the Senior Programme [mentoring] we can endeavour to correct the negative talk that leads to poor self-esteem and provide opportunities to achieve which can improve children / young people's sense of self-worth.

2.3 Self-Efficacy

This is a person's belief that they can succeed in a given situation. High self-efficacy leads to perseverance, resilience, a healthy lifestyle and improved educational performance and job success. Self-efficacy is improved by:

- Learning new skills successfully
- Having positive role models
- Seeing other people succeed through sustained effort
- Receiving encouragement
- Developing strong mental health and wellbeing

By trying new things together, providing encouragement and acting as a positive role model, mentors can improve self-efficacy.

The support will be given until the end of Year 11 unless by agreement of the Committee and parent/carer.

3. Mentoring

The main goal of the mentoring element of the Senior Programme is to continue to provide focussed support for children who are facing significant challenges that might lead them to become more vulnerable to external risks. These might include grooming, gangs, drugs and other negative influences which would prevent them from fulfilling their potential.

To be eligible for mentoring, a child must have attended at least 4 camps, have attendance of 80% or better and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Have experienced significant trauma
- Have a history of dropping out of school

- Be on a child in need or a child protection plan
- Have a parent that has serious mental health issues, or has an addiction

The Family Liaison Officer alongside the Chief Executive will decide who should receive mentoring. Children / young people can be referred for mentoring at any time during their time at Kids on Track but are most likely to join the programme on graduating from the Junior Programme at the end of Year 7.

Anyone who would like to become a mentor will be required to fill in an application form and will be interviewed by a member of the Kids on Track Committee. All mentors will be required to attend the Introduction to Mentoring training, complete the Application Form, supply two references and have a clear DBS check before they are accepted as a mentor. They should also have visited or volunteered at one or more Holiday Camps.

Mentors do not need to have any specific experience, but they do need to demonstrate the values of Kids on Track and have the time to commit to the programme.

The values we would expect are:

- Fun
- Teamwork (togetherness and collaboration)
- Positive attitude (try everything)
- Dependability
- Caring
- Kind
- Good listener

4. Mentor Training

All mentors will be required to attend the Kids on Track face-to-face Safeguarding Training before they can meet one-to-one with their mentee, and to update this annually as required by Kids on Track. Mentors will also be required to attend at least one support meeting per year. The content of the support meetings is designed to enhance and develop the mentoring skills of the group, as well as to share and learn from one another's experiences.

5. Mentor / Mentee Allocation

Mentors will be allocated to mentees by the Family Liaison Officer based on:

- Similar interests
- Type of support required
- Personality traits
- Strength of previous relationship developed at camps

All mentors will receive a summary of their mentee giving:

- Background
- Key contact details

They will also be briefed on any safeguarding concerns by the Family Liaison Officer.

6. Mentoring process

Kids on Track will be responsible for:

- Identifying the mentees
- Recruiting and training the mentors
- Providing Parental Agreement forms
- Making initial contact with the families of potential mentees to find if the child / young person would be interested in being mentored
- Allocating mentees to mentors
- Arranging an initial meeting between the mentor / mentee and the parent / carer
- Providing a programme of events / meetings that support the mentoring process
- Tracking the impact of the mentoring

Mentors will be responsible for:

- Committing to meet regularly with their mentee
- Attending training as required
- Getting the Parental Agreement forms signed
- Adhering to the Senior Programme policy
- Making arrangements about any meet up with the parents / carers of their mentees
- Notifying the Senior Programme Co-ordinator of any potential meet ups
- Letting the mentee and their parents know if they are unable to make a meet up
- Contacting the parents / carer and the Senior Programme Co-ordinator in the event of a no show from the mentee
- Following the Kids on Track Safeguarding policy
- Making sure that any trips / visits are age appropriate
- Setting achievable goals and targets for their mentee
- Making notes after every meet up

- Reporting any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Family Liaison Officer, Senior Programme Coordinator or any other member of the Committee.

7. Expenses

Mentors will be allocated a budget of £20 per month to spend on their mentee. Any expenses exceeding this sum should be approved by the Senior Programme Co-ordinator or CEO.

Any gifts should be pre-approved with the Senior Programme Co-ordinator and should not exceed £10. Vouchers and/or money should not be given as gifts.

Expenses up to £20 per month should be submitted using the Expenses Form via email to the Financial Officer for payment copying in the Senior Programme Co-ordinator for authorisation; expenses forms should be accompanied by copies of receipts.

Requests for expenditure over £100 should be submitted on the grant approval form and agreed by the Committee.

[Grant Approval Form](#)

8. One to one meetings

The mentor should notify the Senior Programme Co-ordinator when and where they are planning to meet up with their mentees.

The mentor should make brief notes after each meeting and report any safeguarding concerns both via the online form (link above) and direct to a member of the operating team.

9. Other Additional Support

Requests for additional financial support will be considered on a case by case basis on submission of a grant application form. Mentors will have to demonstrate:

- The money could not have been found elsewhere
- There will be significant impact from the support

10. Activities Organised by Kids on Track for Mentors and Mentees

There is no obligation for mentors to attend every activity. These are held to provide a support structure for the mentors in an environment where the relationship can develop and the children will find a sense of being part of a larger group.

11. Communications

All email / text communication with mentees must go through the parents / carers.

The mentor can request to set up a WhatsApp group with the Parent, Mentor and Mentee. This ensures that all communication is transparent and helps the mentee take responsibility for their own activities and the relationship. This will only be allowed once the parent/carer has given permission to Kids on Track. [with the knowledge and consent of Kids on Track, and the parent/carer of the young person]

Mentors should not communicate directly with their mentee through social media even if the mentee contacts them. The mentor's response to a direct message from the mentee should be put onto the group chat to ensure transparency.

12. Safeguarding

Kids on Track takes safeguarding very seriously. We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that everyone who comes into contact with the children and their families has a role to play. Please see our Safeguarding Policy for more detail.

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy can be found at: <https://kidsontrack.org.uk/policies/>

All mentors are interviewed and must provide two references. They must also undergo a clear enhanced DBS check provided and paid for by Kids on Track.

All mentors are required to confirm that they have read the safeguarding policy. They must attend annual safeguarding training and are asked to report any safeguarding concerns immediately.

13. Transport

Car journeys are an example of a setting which may unavoidably require a secluded one-to-one situation. These should be undertaken only with a specific purpose relevant to the work of the charity, by prior arrangement and with the permission of the young person and their parent/carer.

In the case of a child or young person urgently needing a lift without prior arrangement, the journey and the reason for it should be immediately reported to the charity and parent/carer.

Mentors should therefore avoid transporting a child alone. If necessary, the mentor can give the mentee a lift in their own car, but this is at the discretion of the mentor. The child must travel in the back. Drivers should do their utmost to spend the least amount of time alone in a car with a young person and where transporting a number of children/young people, should be mindful of not leaving the most vulnerable in the car until last where possible. If possible two adults should travel with the children.

Staff/volunteers, who are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting children should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, with a current MOT certificate, appropriately insured (notify the insurance company of occasional volunteer use) and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

It is inappropriate for staff to offer lifts to a child or young person outside their normal working or volunteering duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the Senior Programme Co-ordinator and has been agreed with the parents/carers.

Taxis will only be provided if it is deemed unsafe for the child / young person to walk home and there is no other reasonable alternative. Any taxi should be booked through the Admin Assistant after approval from a member of the Senior Programme team. Kids on Track will only use taxi firms that have the appropriate safeguarding checks.

There may be occasions where the child or young person requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a child at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded and reported to the Senior Programme Co-ordinator and parents/carers.

Collecting and returning children to/from home

By law there is no set age for leaving children home alone. The law states that you shouldn't leave a child alone if they will be at risk. Deciding what constitutes as risk is left to parents'/carers' discretion.

The NSPCC advises that children under the age of 12 are rarely mature enough to cope in an emergency and should not be left at home alone for a long period of time-

Kids on Track state that children aged under 12 will in no circumstances be left at home alone by staff or volunteers after mentoring and activities; they can be taken to an alternative address and / or left with a 'named individual' other than the parent / carer. This requires written consent to be received from the parent / carer prior to the child being dropped off. Consent will be accepted by text, letter, e-mail or similar as shared with staff or volunteers. 'Named individuals' need to be 16 years or older.

Regardless of age, mentees will not be left home alone, with a parent / carer or with a 'named individual', if:

- The mentee is scared or worried to be left
- The mentor is concerned about the wellbeing of the child
- The mentor feels the environment is not safe.

All parents / carers will be informed of our policy on this matter in an introductory letter, and asked to acknowledge their understanding of this practise in our Parental Mentoring Agreement form.

If for under 12s there is no parent / carer home or there is any concern about leaving a mentee aged over 12 at home alone, a mentor should:

- Contact the parent/carer to find out where they are

- If they will be less than 30 minutes, wait with the young person in the car and text the Mentor Co-ordinator to notify them
- If they will be more than 30 minutes or you cannot get hold of the parent/carer, call the Mentor Co-ordinator or DSL who will advise on next steps.

14. Health and Safety

The link to the Kids on Track Health and Safety Policy is below. In addition, mentors should consider their own and their mentee's health and safety when planning any meeting on their own or in small groups. If the Mentoring team plans an event, Risk Assessments will be undertaken as well as the usual checks regarding Insurance and DBS checks on the company providing the activity.

Our Health and Safety Policy can be found at: <https://kidsontrack.org.uk/policies/>

15. Monitoring Impact

Monitoring the impact of the Mentoring Programme is essential in order to demonstrate a positive change for the child. A robust monitoring framework will also increase the likelihood of successful applications for funding. Impact is currently measured by a combination of regular questionnaires to the child, the parent and detailed note-taking after every meeting with the child; and regular verbal updates. The hours of mentoring are recorded along with attendance of each child at the pre-arranged activities.

Approved by Trustees: March 2024

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