

A Parent's Guide to Mentoring in Rockbrook

Rockbrook Park School seeks to provide supportive personal guidance as part of its educational service to all students. The school's mentor system is a major element in this educational service provided by the school. Each student is assigned a member of the academic staff to act as a personal mentor. The mentor helps in guiding the student's academic progress and in the development of his character and personality. Through mentoring and the integrated formation offered by Rockbrook each student will be encouraged to do his best and to serve society through his work and unique personal qualities.

The same mentor may be assigned to a student over his six years in Rockbrook. Mentors meet the students entrusted to them on a regular basis (usually on a three-weekly basis), in total around ten times during the academic year.

Mentors meet with the parents / guardian of the student three times annually. Parents are requested to organise these meetings through the school secretary. To assist in this, some particular evenings are assigned for such meetings in the school calendar, although a mentor may be available at other times instead (e.g. during the school day). Mentors also encourage parents to participate fully in the parent education programme of the school.

Parents should be aware that mentors neither are educational experts nor are they qualified to identify special needs. They are teachers who, with some training, are helping in the development of the character of the student. If a parent requires advice on particular special needs or on career guidance, they should use other resources or services within the school.

Part of a mentor's role is to highlight strengths and weaknesses in behaviour and personality, as witnessed in school or on school-related activities, with positive practical advice to the student and to his parents on how to address these. Specifically a mentor is a person who is well placed to draw the various threads together, so as to help paint a true picture of the student within the school and in the out-of-school environment, insofar as it relates to his developmental needs. A mentor is not a replacement for a subject teacher or a form-master: parents should see the subject teacher if they wish to get background academic information, or should see the form-master if discipline issues need to be discussed.

The better a mentor knows a family, the more useful the advice a mentor can give. In this regard, parents are reminded that they are the first educators and the school is an extension of this work, not a replacement for parents. It would not be unusual for a family to feel comfortable in inviting a mentor for a meal or to the family home from time to time.

Parents need to grow to trust their son's mentor; if any party feels that sufficient trust is not there, then a change of mentor may be advisable. Parents can contact the school principal or deputy principal to request a change of mentor at any time. This happens

from time to time for a whole variety of reasons, and is not viewed to be bad spirit in any way. For example, in their first year students may be mentored in small groups; thus it is likely that a boy's mentor might change going into second year.

Mentors have a duty to check with parents with regard to their involvement within the school. Specifically parents should be attending parent education meetings, parent-teacher meetings, as well as involving themselves in social activities with other parents.

The mentoring role covers a whole range of topics in an age-appropriate way. These include: study habits; attitudes to homework; academic achievement; aiming for excellence; sports; team involvements; Clann involvement; health and well being (including issues around drugs, alcohol); personal character development; use of free time (social networking, computer games, TV, reading, hobbies and pastimes); school trips; religious faith and practise; conscience & respect for other faiths; relationships, friendships inside and outside of school, and respect for girls; respect for others and for laws; leadership; peer pressure; service to others; service within the family.