

Program Outline

7.1 WBYM Program Outline

- All students in Year 7-12 attending a participating District High School are eligible to have individual mentors.
- It is recommended that schools have a class mentor for their upper primary class where emailing is done as a class through the teacher. This platform creates great insight, enthusiasm and training under the guidance of a teacher before students have their own individual mentor.
- Schools may also consider their secondary students mentoring junior primary class students to enhance relationships across the school, increase secondary leadership opportunities and give the secondary students a sense of being a mentor as well as a mentee.

7.2 Aims of the program

The aims of the program are as follows:

- a. For students to be inspired by a young adult mentor to investigate a wider variety of jobs and career pathways than they are exposed to in their community.
- b. One on one friend, confidante and support to provide young people with a sense of the broader world.
- c. To provide another layer of psycho-emotional support to promote positive wellbeing as young people transition from adolescence to adulthood.
- d. To inspire and support students to achieve their goals and dreams.

7.3 Getting Started

For adults to be eligible to join the program they must be over 18 and not come from the local community. This is a deliberate decision to help broaden the student's horizons. Most of our mentors are university students; however, this is not a pre-requisite. History has shown that it doesn't matter whether the mentees are aspiring to university or not, these mentors are valuable influences on student's lives.

Mentors are required to complete the following things when applying to join the program:

- an application form
- provide a current Western Australian Working with Children's Check
- a social media release form
- mentor health/emergency contact form

When an application is received, referee checks are completed and the School-Based Coordinator may choose to phone the mentor to discuss the program, get to know them

briefly and discuss any queries they may have. Mentors are well screened before they commence the program.

Once a mentor has been accepted into the program they are required to complete the online Training Package and Child Protection Policy. (See www.wbym.com.au)

Reading the application and talking to the mentor on the phone, along with good knowledge of the students and their family, allows for effective match-ups of a mentor and mentee. The quality of the applicants means that it isn't hard to get a good match, but common interests and ideas ensure a better relationship can develop. Except in extenuating circumstances, a mentor/mentees relationship remains constant until either the mentee leaves the school, or the mentor leaves the program. This could be up to 6 years. The extended relationship creates a strong bond and allows for great achievements both personally and academically as the mentee progresses through their lower secondary education.

The school also provides mentees with training, so they better understand what mentoring is, the benefits and how the program runs in the school. This includes information about goal setting, quality conversations, how to get the most out of the program and what to do if there are issues.

Once a mentee and mentor are matched and all paperwork is completed an email is sent from the school to inform the mentor of their mentee's name and provide them with a brief information sheet, completed by the mentee, giving some background about themselves and their family. The mentee is now ready to send their first email.

7.4 Contact

Mentees predominantly email via their school email address, which they can access several times per week from school. They can also access their emails from home through the Department of Education (DOE) portal. It is expected that mentors and mentees email each other at least once per week. Any party that is unable to email within this timeframe (e.g. holidays, exams) is asked to let the other party know and send an email at the earliest possible opportunity. Whilst emailing is the only requirement of the program other types of contact are allowed and encouraged if both parties and the parents of the mentees are in agreement. Other types of contact include:

- Skype from a home computer is an effective way to make contact as it is free, both parties can see each other, and it can be done in the evenings when mentors are more likely to be available.
- Skype from a school computer may be arranged if the mentor and mentee are available at the same time and it is organised with the school.
- Mentors and mentees are also able to contact by text and phone calls. However, social media contact (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram etc) relationships are **NOT ALLOWED**.
- Face to face catch ups are encouraged and have proven to greatly enhance the relationship but are not essential.
 - It is suggested that each year the school organise an Introductory Weekend in the town so mentors can meet their mentee and see the town. This could occur on a Friday afternoon and Saturday around the end of March or early

April. A variety of activities should be organised to showcase the places of most significance to the students (e.g. pool, school, recreation centre)

- A second weekend (e.g. Winter Sport Catch Up weekend) could be arranged during July/August. This is another significant part of the mentees lives.
- Mentees are encouraged to try to meet with their mentor in Perth. Students and their families are often visiting Perth and we encourage them to take a little bit of time to try to catch up with their mentors. This is to be done at a neutral venue (not at the mentor's house) and could include anything from meeting at a park, having lunch or coffee together or attending an event together.
- While mentees should be informing their mentor of upcoming events, it is beneficial for the school to also inform mentors of events happening in the town that they may choose to attend informally. Some mentors may choose to visit of their own accord for an event. If mentors wish to attend a school or community event, they need to let the School-Based Coordinator know so they can liaise with your mentee's family to ensure they will be attending and, where possible, arrange accommodation.
- It is recommended that schools also aim to organise a couple of day trips a year to Perth to allow mentees to meet up with their mentors in their environment.
- Mentors are also welcome to attend the school on any weekday or community on weekends of their own accord. If it is a school day, mentors may be able to spend the day with the students at school. If a mentor wanted to go to a town on a weekend of their own choosing to catch up with their mentee, they must arrange this through the School-Based Coordinator who will liaise with their mentee's family as well as try to organise accommodation.
- Students at some schools may attend a camp in Perth which may include opportunities for mentors to attend especially in the evening.
- Mentors are welcome to attend all or part of any activity that they can make it to. If they can only make it to part of an activity that is fine.

The cost of activities organised by the school is kept to a minimum for all involved. WBYM have some sponsorship that helps pay for venues, activities, food and accommodation. We recognise that this is a voluntary activity, hence do everything in our power to ensure it is not expensive to be involved.

When travelling to your mentee's town we recommend that mentors carpool where possible. Schools will advise of the safest and best route to travel. Approximate travel time should also be advised by the school. Fuel costs will be reimbursed through the WBYM committee, capped according to the distance from Perth (School-Based Coordinators should liaise with the WBYM treasurer for specific amounts). To claim this reimbursement, send your fuel receipt and bank details to the WBYM Treasurer.

It is advised that you are unlikely to get phone reception from any provider except Telstra once you leave Perth. During your travel time there may be times that you will get no mobile phone signal even with a Telstra sim card. ATMs may also be unavailable. For the

mentor's safety, we ask that you update your Health and Emergency Contacts form, if necessary, before your trip to the town.

While face to face contact is encouraged, we recognise that mentors have their own lives and are busy people. With that in mind we know that it can be difficult for some mentors to attend any face to face events and that they may choose to only make contact by email. The only requirement of the program is emailing, so any other contact is a bonus. Whilst everyone enjoys the extra contact, history has shown that wonderful relationships have developed with email contact only. It is the quality of the engagement that is important in whatever form that contact occurs. Everyone will get out of the program what they put into it. If you send great emails you will receive great emails and develop a great relationship. We have seen mentees leave our school and continue to communicate with their mentor, even though they have never met each other.

While parents may think it is a relationship between a mentor and mentee, the involvement of the whole family, like anything in your child's life, is invaluable. We strongly encourage parents to talk to their child about the program to gain more understanding of it, talk about their mentor, topics of conversation they may have with them, what they have learned from their mentor and how the program makes them feel. This will help your child gain the most out of the program. We would love to see parents also become involved in face to face activities as well as enabling catch-ups to occur in Perth. Enormous benefits can be gained by the whole family meeting the mentor and embracing this fabulous opportunity.

7.5 How Does The Program Run At The School?

Mentee/Mentor match-ups are organised as early as possible in the school year. Mentees are provided with training and given a workbook to complete throughout the year. The workbook includes:

- a pre-evaluation and post reflection sheets.
- a brainstorm of good topics of conversation that has been completed by the whole group.
- information on the value of setting goals and how to write a SMART goal. Students then set short and long-term goals for themselves which they continue to work on with their mentor throughout the year. This includes discussing possible strategies and resources to achieve their goals, gaining motivation from their mentor to continue or ways to modify part of their goal where necessary, and evaluating/celebrating achievement of that goal.
- a mentor information sheet that allows an opportunity to ask questions about their mentor and gives mentees a starting point during early emails.
- a calendar to record upcoming events that they could discuss with their mentor, and any contact, email or other, that they have received or sent.

Teacher support is given to ensure the workbooks are kept up to date.

Topics of conversation are likely to be superficial while mentors and mentees are getting to know each other (where they live, what they do, hobbies, interests, family, travel, sport). As the relationship progresses, topics discussed will progress to become more complex and rich

, such as: opportunities you or your family have had, school, study habits and techniques, options for Year 11 & 12 and beyond, career and study options, transitioning from their current school to a larger school, goal setting, dreams, leaving home, friends and social issues, social and emotional development, thoughts to challenge your thinking and ideas, local, state and world news and topics of interest, developing and building on a mentee's values and integrity, resilience, persistence, organisational skills, belief in their own ability, independence and individuality.

Students are given several opportunities a week during class time to check and send emails as well as record information. If a student hasn't heard from their mentor for a week, they have a checklist to follow to ensure correct email addresses are used, emails have been sent etc. They are then required to send another email. If after 2 weeks they still haven't heard from their mentor, the student completes a form letting the School-Based Coordinator know of the lack of communication, which is then followed up with the mentor. Some issues are school based/mentee issues and sometimes mentors just need a little reminder to make contact.

Please note that the association is not responsible for mentee's personal injuries or property damage which may occur during WBYM activities, unless the association is proven to be negligent.

7.6 Feedback

At the end of each year extensive feedback is collected through a one on one interview with each mentor, mentee and the mentee's parent/carers. This feedback is used to evaluate the program and make any necessary changes to improve it. More recently our data has been used by Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt for an extensive evaluation into the positive effects our unique style of mentoring has and is having on our students. This is exciting and highlights the benefits to all involved.

7.7 Support

Apart from the training, which is completed by mentors and mentees, School-Based Coordinators are available to support mentors, mentees and their families where needed. If there are any concerns about the program, a person or poor quality of contact, parents and mentees are encouraged to contact their School-Based Coordinator and mentors and committee members are encouraged to contact the WBYM Chairperson or Authorised Delegate.

Schools may also have a WBYM Facebook page specific for their school to communicate with their mentors. If so, all mentors are encouraged to join as it is an effective line of communication for events as well as supporting each other. Mentors may also organise social gatherings amongst themselves for further support.

A WBYM What's App group for mentors across all programs is a great way for mentors to support each other and for communicating mentor activities including mentor social gatherings and extra training and support, run by long term mentors and committee members Claire Bailey and Jarrad Paul.

As this program is reliant on good electronic communication, it is important that all mentors and committee members respond to any communication from organising parties within the program by phone, Facebook or text in a timely manner. Responses don't need to be long or elaborate, just a yes or no reply will often be enough. It can be time consuming and difficult to organise events if members don't reply, hence the need for follow up prompts.

7.8 How to make a good relationship great?

- Frequent, good quality communication.
- Variety of communication types where possible (e.g. email, Skype, text, face to face).
- Whole family being a part of the program (e.g. joining in events, talking to your child about their experiences with the program, attending events in the local community as well as making time for mentees to meet their mentor in Perth, parents to meet the mentors).
- Mentees to join in face to face events even if their mentor can't make it.
- Seek support quickly if there are any concerns about the program.