



# Mentoring Handbook

2017

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# Introduction

## Overview of the school

### Aurora College: NSW's first virtual selective high school

Aurora College is NSW's virtual selective high school providing government students in rural and remote communities a broad range of curriculum opportunities through a cutting-edge synchronous virtual learning environment which allows students to 'connect locally' and 'learn globally'.

Aurora College provides selective classes in English, mathematics and science, for students in years 7-10. Students are enrolled both in their local secondary school and our selective classes. They are dual students of both schools. Our senior students, in year 11 and 12, study subjects that may not be available for them in their local school.

Twice a year, students come together for a residential camp. This allows them the opportunity to interact with their peers and teachers and complete practical tasks in lessons and excursions.

## Rationale

### e-Mentoring at Aurora College

Mentoring is a key feature of the learning experiences at Aurora.

*Mentoring can be crucial for students in rural and remote communities because they face unique challenges including limited access to higher education, less variety of courses offered, narrowed school curricula, and a lack of work-related role models (Barbour 2007; Crawford 2006 in Li et al, 2010).*



The Aurora e-mentoring program is a flexible mentoring model aimed at supporting gifted and talented students in rural and remote communities to:

- better understand their skills, values and interests;
- explore a variety of academic and career options; and
- further develop their social and emotional wellbeing

## Benefits of mentoring

Mentoring, either face-to-face or e-mentoring, has a range of benefits for both the mentor and the student(s).

### Benefits for the student

Mentoring provides students with opportunities to:

- > ask questions that matter to them;
- > access authentic information;
- > stimulate their interests and further inquiry;
- > increase their awareness of career opportunities;
- > further develop self-esteem and confidence; and
- > broaden their exposure to industry experts and professional role models.

### Benefits for the mentor

An Aurora College mentor will have the opportunity to:

- show how people can contribute to a better society;
- develop active community partnerships;
- be able to dispel stereotypes about certain fields/occupations;
- reflect on work practice and purpose;
- gain public recognition in their area of expertise;
- enhance their own self-confidence and competence;
- have opportunities to share skills and achievements;
- have the convenience of mentoring online.

# What does mentoring look like at Aurora?

Mentoring at Aurora College is either offered to students who self-nominate for the mentoring program or a targeted group of students. Student profiles are matched, as best as possible, with a mentor who has similar interests and experiences. Mentoring takes place during school hours with flexibility to accommodate student timetables and the availability of mentors.

Under the guidance and supervision of Aurora College staff, mentoring sessions may take place via the college's virtual learning environment, at the mentor's workplace, or in person at one of the residential school programs held each year.

A typical commitment by a mentor to the project in one school year would be for maximum of: 2 - 3 x 40 minute sessions per term (a total of 9-12 sessions per year)

Specialist external organisations may be engaged to run mentoring sessions as required. Each organisation must be approved by the Principal, Aurora College and comply with DoE guidelines and regulations such as the Code of Conduct, Working With Children check and Child Protection Policy training.

Mentoring sessions are a learning process in which the mentor may use discussion, inquiry, requests and reflection to help students identify personal and career goals. They can help to develop relationships, understandings, strategies and action plans intended to achieve these goals. Importantly, in the student/mentor relationship, students are responsible for their own achievements and success. The student may act and the mentor may assist, but the mentor doesn't lead or do more than the student. The mentor can also assist by sharing an outside, unbiased perspective and specific insights and skills to empower the students toward their goals.

Themes for mentoring sessions aim to address topics that are age-appropriate and relevant to students at their stage of schooling. The theme and content of each session is largely driven by student interest and mentor willingness. The content of mentoring sessions is flexible and derived from 5 key themes (as pictured around the page). It may take on new directions as relationships build and trust developed throughout the program.

1

## Getting to Know You Activities

To allow students and mentors to get to know each other in a meaningful way which creates both a fun and safe environment.

2

## Personal Development Activities

To provide students with an awareness of their personal skills, attitudes and values, enhancing their career planning and long term academic outcomes.

3

## Career Exploration Activities

To provide students with insight into different occupational environments, develop their leadership capabilities and to expanded their career options.

4

## Wellbeing Activities

To encourage self-confidence and resilience in our students to allow them to reach their full potential.

5

## Personal Reflection/ Closing the Match Activities

To allow students and mentors to acknowledge their time together in the program is formally coming to an end.

A sample of the topics for a year group is included below. Mentors are provided with all the materials and resources to guide them in leading a mentoring session.

Theme	Topic	Content
Getting to know you	A journey you would like to take	Face to face session at Residential program
Personal Development Terms 1-2	About me	My personal SWOT
	Enhancing Student Performance	Effective communication
	Emotional Intelligence	Self-awareness and self-regulation
Career Exploration Terms 3-4	Exploring Different Careers	Personality types and careers
	Career Skill Development	The changing work environment
	Leadership	Personal brand
	The Future of Work	Entrepreneurships
	Emotional Skill Development	Confidence
	Stress Management	How to be happy!
Personal Reflection Term 4	Closing the Match	Reflection on the mentoring sessions

Other topics that could come up in mentoring sessions can include specific discussions with the mentor about:

- what daily working life involves
- the strategies used for working with different types of people in the workplace
- why you chose your profession and the career path you followed
- how you manage any stress and pressures in the workplace
- the skills you have developed and how you acquired these
- what your future career goals are, and what steps you may be taking to achieve them
- shared interests and ideas that appeal to you
- an interesting project or event you participated in
- the student's progress at school and their career plans

# Information for Parents

Parental consent must be sought in writing for student participation prior to the commencement of the mentoring program. Parents are welcome to discuss the program and the student's progress at any time with Aurora staff. Parents also retain the right to withdraw the student from mentoring arrangements at any time. This can be done by contacting the Aurora College office.

## Aurora College roles and responsibilities

Aurora College will:

- retain duty of care
- gauge student interests
- provide training for mentors
- engage appropriate external organisations to provide mentoring services as required
- arrange suitable locations (including virtual locations in Adobe Connect rooms) and supervise mentoring sessions
- seek written consent from parents about student participation
- provide opportunities to parents to discuss anticipated outcomes and student progress
- keep and maintain appropriate records
- not engage a person if they are placed on the DoE's Staffing Services 'not to be employed' list
- retain copies of mentor ID for 5 years

Students will:

- engage with the mentor in a respectful manner
- recognise boundaries e.g. appropriate interactions, no contact outside scheduled mentoring times
- ask questions that will assist in learning about a certain field
- take responsibility for their own actions
- observe agreed protocols
- be able to withdraw from the program at any time

Mentors will:

- engage with students in a professional and respectful manner
- adhere to boundaries and not make contact with students outside of mentoring sessions
- be sensitive to student's individual contexts
- raise any concerns that arise directly with executive staff at Aurora College
- engage in the DoE's *Child Protection Awareness Training*
- follow DoE working with children protocols.

# Information for Mentors

## Commitment

A key requirement for mentors is attendance. In some circumstances, the mentor may be one of few positive and dependable role model in students' lives to date. Poor attendance and commitment can reinforce negative elements of existing relationships and significantly impact student self-esteem. By agreeing to participate, it is critical to attend all sessions you have committed to unless there is an exceptional circumstance. Your commitment to mentoring is what will make it a success.

Aurora College will provide short, targeted training including:

- strategies for running a successful mentoring session
- expectations
- policies and protocols to protect and support mentors e.g.: child protection and duty of care
- appropriate relationship boundaries
- active listening skills
- familiarisation with IT platform for delivery
- sample mentoring activities
- permission to be photographed form (if applicable)

## Qualities

The skills and knowledge of a more experienced person can be very important in enabling a young person to progress along several paths. These paths might range from finishing high school, to improving communication skills or setting achievable life and career goals. Good mentoring helps to develop the competence and character of the student. The most effective mentors offer support, challenge, are patient and show enthusiasm while they guide others to new levels of achievement. They do not view themselves as superior to the student.

A mentor is ideally someone who:

- has a willingness to invest time in a mentoring relationship
- is reliable
- shows sensitivity and understanding
- has significant experience and expertise in the workforce
- demonstrates good communication skills
- models respect for alternate views and cultures
- has good listening skills
- has the ability to relate positively in a supportive, non-judgmental manner
- recognises when they need to call in special assistance
- has the capacity to establish firm boundaries and understand the limits of the mentoring role



## Rules of engagement

- **No contact with students outside scheduled mentoring times and locations** (including virtual locations such as email, phone calls, text messages or social media)
- Do not reveal confidential information about yourself or your employer e.g.: do not give students your business card, home address or phone number, email address or social media information
- Do not give money or buy gifts for your student(s)
- Talk to Aurora College if you are concerned about something said to you in confidence
- Be sensitive to the financial, cultural, spiritual, and environmental contexts of your student(s)
- Stay professional in conversation – no comments about physical appearance or dress
- Be respectful of values, ideas and opinions that may differ to your own

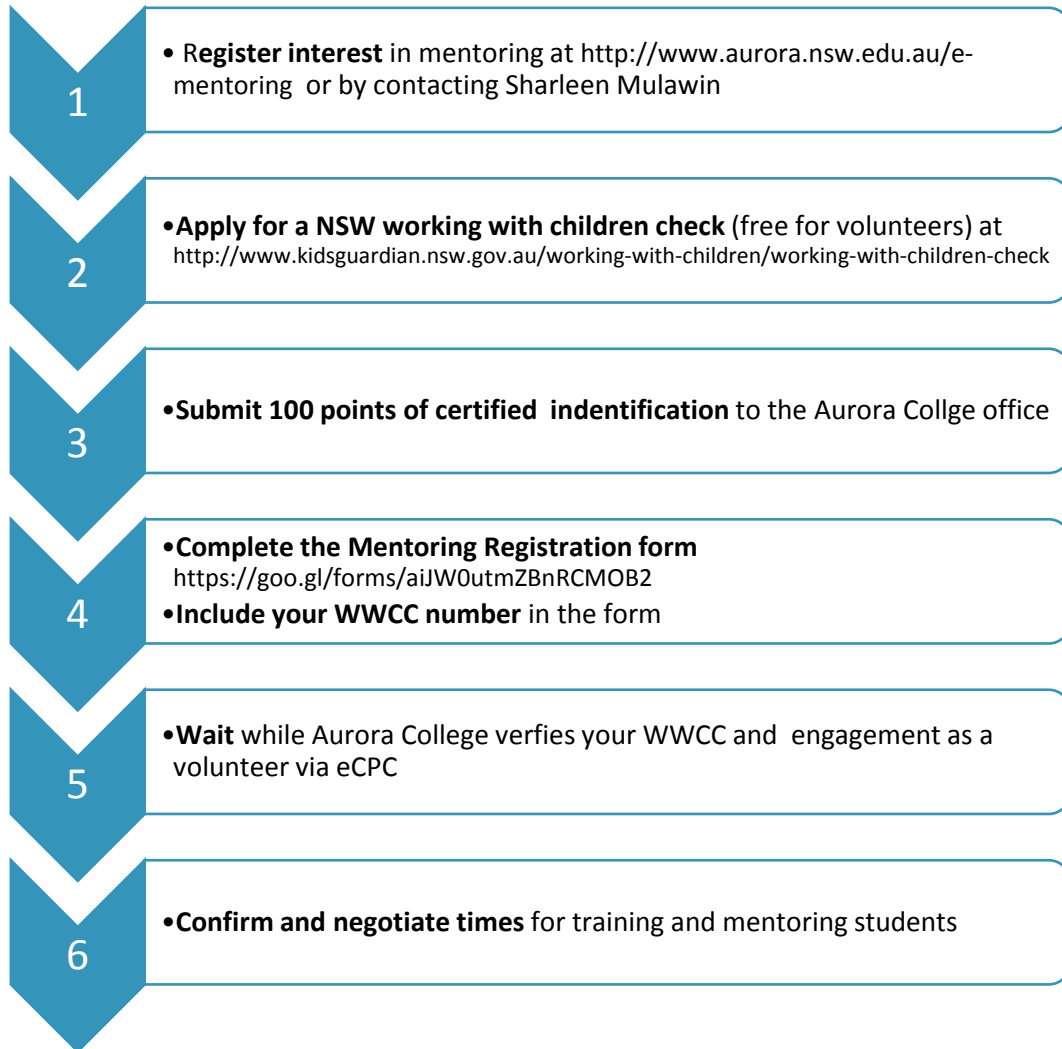
## Applying to become a mentor

The mentoring program follows the Department of Education's (DoE) policies and guidelines.

A Working With Children Check (WWCC) is a mandatory requirement for anyone engaging in child related work in NSW. Mentors are classed as volunteers for education purposes and therefore are not required to pay a fee.

The following page outlines the registration process for mentors.

## Steps for registering as a mentor



## Further information

The following links provide details on DoE policies and processes for mentoring and getting a working with children check.

### **DoE Code of Conduct**

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-centre/why-choose-us/code-of-conduct>

### **DoE Mentoring students policy**

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/mentoring-students-policy>

### **DoE working with Children Check Policy**

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/working-with-children-check-policy>

### **How to apply for a working with children check clearance**

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/Working-with-Children-Check-Appendix-4-Information-for-applicants.pdf>

### **NSW Working with Children Check**

<http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children/working-with-children-check>

### **Proof of Identity requirements**

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/Appendix6-Proof-of-Identity.pdf>

#### **For further information or questions contact:**

Sharleen Mulawin | Relieving Head Teacher Teaching & Learning.



1300 287 629



sharleen.mulawin@det.nsw.edu.au



3B smalls Rd, Ryde NSW 2112 | P: 02 9886 7560

E: [auroracoll-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:auroracoll-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au) W: [www.aurora.nsw.edu.au](http://www.aurora.nsw.edu.au)