

Personal Tutoring Policy

Introduction

Bird College has an established commitment to personal tutoring as a provision for students, in recognition of its crucial and on-going role in student retention and achievement. Personal tutoring also has an important role to play in the building of a supportive community amongst students and staff. It is our belief if students' welfare is catered for and the different facets of the student's college life are addressed, their experience throughout their time at Bird College will be enriched and they will progress through the programme with greater ease.

This policy specifies ways in which a more consistent practice can be maintained; it builds on the existing practice and reflects the priorities of both students and staff. This policy also correlates closely with the University of Greenwich Personal Tutoring Policy.

We acknowledge the importance of personal tutoring in the creation of a sense of belonging that is crucial for students' retention. The relationship created between tutor and tutee is one of trust and respect and their meetings will provide a context in which peer relationships can also develop, both of which will support students' academic and personal development.

Aims

- To set out entitlements, roles and responsibilities of personal tutors and students as tutees
- To set out the responsibilities of Bird College in supporting and resourcing personal tutoring
- To achieve consistency in practice and parity of provision across the College
- To schedule regular and themed-focused timetabled personal tutoring sessions which will address diversity and the nature of particular cohorts.

Principles

The aim of personal tutoring is to enhance each student's experience at Bird College and establish a sense of belonging. This will be achieved through:

- A holistic one-to-one relationship between student and personal tutor to support and monitor the student's personal and academic development
- Peer group interactions to build friendships, confidence and identity for the student's social development and integration.

The personal tutoring provision will be transparent and communicated to both students and staff by the establishment of:

- Clear definitions of roles and responsibilities
- Baseline entitlement for students
- Baseline resourcing for staff

The role of personal tutor is a distinct and well-refined role which should not be confused with other academic roles. The role of personal tutor goes beyond that of an academic/vocational tutor and encompasses pastoral, academic and administrative elements. Personal tutors have a specific responsibility for their tutees as individuals, as well as students of Bird College. They act as the bridge between the institution and the student, guiding and monitoring their progress in a holistic way.

Personal tutor meetings will address students' academic progress, but they will also go beyond it and address topics of a more personal nature.

Issues relating to the operation of the college or curriculum should not be discussed in personal tutor meetings. If such matters are raised, tutors should sign post students to the Principal who will raise the matter at the appropriate meetings or boards.

New students will be provided with an increased level of personal tutoring in order to help them settle into college life and to increasingly take responsibility for their own learning and development.

It is the joint responsibility of the tutee and personal tutor to build a successful and effective relationship and it is the responsibility of Bird College to provide the conditions in which this relationship can thrive.

Students' baseline entitlement and responsibilities

All students will be allocated a named personal tutor, to support and enhanced their personal and academic development and monitor their progress.

Students will be informed at the start of the academic year of their named personal tutor and details of their first group meeting. Every new student will have a meeting with their personal tutor at the start of the academic year, either individually or in group. At this meeting, the students will be made aware of the purpose and scope of their personal tutoring.

All students will have meetings within the college timetable and as specified in the College's baseline provision detailed in Appendix A.

Personal tutors will also be available for one-to-one contact as required. These meetings can be arranged at mutually convenient times and either the tutor or tutee can request a meeting. As with all classes at Bird College these meetings are a compulsory part of the timetable.

Students will be given by the College:

- Clear information about what they can expect from their personal tutor, including the explanation of the purpose and scope of the personal tutoring system
- Clear information about their personal tutor contact details and how to arrange personal meetings

Students are expected to engage fully with their personal tutor by accepting their responsibility for the role they play in creating an effective relationship, and should therefore:

- Actively participate in arranged meetings
- Respond to all communication from their personal tutor in a timely manner
- Keep their personal tutor informed of any changes that may affect their academic work and progress
- Alert their personal tutor of any additional or specific learning needs
- Respect personal tutor's working hours

Students receive a copy of the student handbook which sets out what is expected of them during their time at the College.

Staff responsibilities and baseline resourcing

Personal tutors will always represent the college in a professional manner. They will be pro-active in establishing a personal and non-judgmental relationship with their allocated tutees. They will support their personal and academic development, monitor their progress, and recognise their tutees' needs in a sensitive manner.

Staff will be allocated as personal tutors based on their experience, availability and expertise.

Personal tutors will hold timetabled personal tutor meetings with their new students at the start of the academic year, either individually or in a group.

Personal tutors will hold timetabled group meetings with their tutees as specified in the baseline entitlement (Appendix A).

Personal tutors will be available for additional individual meetings as required, by mutual agreement and in advertised working hours.

Personal tutors are expected to:

- Be the first point of contact for students throughout the student's time at Bird College
- Maintain regular contact with their allocated tutees
- Be informed of about College's policies and procedures (attendance, extenuating circumstances, learning support, counselling, etc)
- Know how to refer students to other sources of support
- Respect confidentiality in an appropriate and professional manner
- Be accessible and available in line with the student's baseline personal tutoring entitlement
- Provide tutees with contact and working hours information
- Be respectful of other members of staff and students.
- Not criticise other staff or students
- Access records and tracking systems as available to monitor student's progress
- Keep records of personal tutorial contact, as appropriate and in line with College's guidelines and procedures
- Be sufficiently informed to write reference letters

Personal tutors are not expected to:

- Be responsible for more than 30 tutees under normal circumstances
- Provide any type of specialist support that goes beyond their expertise, such as counselling

Personal tutors will receive:

- Induction and professional development to support them in their role
- Access to appropriate space where individual meetings can take place

College’s organisation for delivery and monitoring

The College is responsible for ensuring that personal tutoring is clearly explained to both staff and students and that its promotion is an integral part of the College’s commitment to address the student’s wellbeing from a holistic perspective.

It is the college’s expectation that new students will meet their personal tutor at least three times during the academic year, and that continuing students will meet their personal tutor twice during the academic year.

Appendix A

Baseline specification of timetabled and individual tutorial provision

Minimal entitlement and resourcing for personal tutor meetings		
BA and Diploma new first year students	A personal tutor meeting at the start of the academic year (or on arrival if late)	Individual or Group
	Timetabled personal tutor meeting once a term	Individual or Group
	One-to-one as required by mutual arrangement	Individual
BA and Diploma continuing students	Timetabled personal tutor meeting once a term	Individual or Group
	One-to-one as required by mutual arrangement	Individual
PPFY students	A personal tutor meeting at the start of the academic year (or on arrival if late)	Individual or Group
	Timetabled personal tutor meeting once a term	Individual or Group
	One-to-one as required by mutual arrangement	Individual

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