

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Starfish mentor.

This information will outline the commitment and responsibilities of a Starfish mentor for your consideration whilst you weigh up if this is the right step for you.



Starfish

Starfish is a Salvation Army mentoring programme, supporting children and young people aged 9 to 16 in schools.

The aim of Starfish is to make a difference to young people, one by one. This is inspired by the story of the man who – one by one – throws stranded starfish back into the sea. Challenged on what difference it can possibly make to the thousands of beached starfish around him, he replies, ‘It made a difference to that one!’

Starfish is offered to local schools free of charge, offering early help focused on emotional health and wellbeing. Working within a school’s student wellbeing support, Starfish provides committed and trusted adults (mentors) to work with young people who need additional help, without which they would be at risk of not meeting their full potential.

Young people who benefit from mentoring come from all walks of life. Every young person has unique skills, talents and abilities, but not always the opportunity to flourish. Through the establishment of mentoring relationships, Starfish provides opportunities for young people to be supported, to develop positive personal and relational life skills, a healthy emotional wellbeing and to reach their potential.

Mentor’s role description

Starfish mentors are local corps or community members who are passionate about giving their time to journey alongside a young person in need.

The role of a mentor sits between teacher, coach, counsellor, adviser and friend. The mentor plays a special role that is not any one of these, while to some degree it is a bit of all of them. The mentor is there to support, encourage, listen, build, advise and be a sounding board for the mentees as they journey through school.

No one can be too old to mentor or not ‘cool’ enough. Anyone with time to give, ears to listen and an open heart can walk alongside a young person in need – an hour or so a week can be enough to make a significant impact.

It is recommended that Starfish mentors be aged 21-years or older. This ensures that mentors have sufficient life experience and maturity to effectively support and guide mentees throughout the mentoring programme.

A Starfish mentor aims to:

- Be a consistent, positive and encouraging role model to the young person.
- Facilitate a journey of self-discovery for the young person.
- Promote positive physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Nurture the young person's relationships with their peers and family.
- Encourage healthy life choices.
- Help the young person engage positively with school/learning.
- Take a genuine interest in the life of the young person while at the same time recognising appropriate and consistent boundaries.
- Safeguard the wellbeing of the young person at all times whilst responsible for their care.


A Starfish mentor will be required to:

- Attend mentoring training before commencing mentoring, facilitated by the Children & Youth Department.
- Complete some short courses on iLearn, including Safeguarding Essentials.
- Meet with their mentee once a week for a set period of time.
- Allocate 1.5 to 2 hours per week per mentee. This includes preparation for sessions and completing session notes. For example, prep time 30-45 minutes, session with mentee 45-60 minutes, session notes/updates 15-30 minutes.
- Prepare fun and engaging one-to-one mentoring sessions.
- Assist mentees in the setting of, and working towards, their chosen goals/targets.
- Use the Outcomes Star and Journey of Change to provide a focus for mentoring and to reinforce positive change.
- Update Star Online with Outcomes Star readings.
- Complete short session notes after every session and ensure they are securely stored in SharePoint.

- Complete additional reports for the school.
- Engage in regular supervision with the Starfish Co-ordinator.
- Attend regular online training sessions on mentoring-related topics, as made available by the CY Department. This includes Sea Stars and Mindset training.
- Attend multi-agency meetings regarding the young person if required.
- Have an up to date background check: Enhanced DBS (England/Wales), PVG (Scotland), Access NI (Northern Ireland) and Garda Check (Republic of Ireland).

Starfish Mentor Training

Starfish is dedicated to the personal development of its mentors through a comprehensive training package. This training goes beyond merely introducing new skills; it also creates opportunities for the mutual sharing of best practices and for mentors to offer support and encouragement to one another. Upon completing the training, mentors will receive a certificate to authenticate their training.

Mentoring Training

Mentoring training is a two-day residential course, which includes Outcomes Star training. This course is designed to explore the role and skills of a mentor as well as the expectations and guidelines of Starfish mentoring. The Children & Youth Department run this training at William Booth College. This training is a highly valuable introduction for mentors, helping them understand the role they will play in supporting young people. Prospective mentors and new co-ordinators must attend this training before they begin mentoring in schools.

iLearn

The mentor must to complete the following online modules that are generic to all Salvation Army volunteers, prior to attending the Starfish mentoring training.

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (employees only)
 - Equity and Diversity (volunteers only)
 - Challenging Diversity Assumptions (volunteers only)
 - Data Protection at The Salvation Army
 - Safeguarding Essentials in England, Wales and NI
- or*
- Safeguarding Essentials in Scotland



Ongoing Training

The CY Department will run additional regular online training sessions on mentoring-related topics. These sessions are important for ensuring mentors and co-ordinators remain equipped and skilled to respond to the evolving needs of young people.

Sea Stars: 30-minute sessions on topics such as trauma types and our response, therapeutic mentoring, shame, and how creativity builds relationships.

Mindset: a short course covering emotional regulation, ACES and trauma awareness, attachment and relationships, care giving and care seeking, and building connection.

The CY Department also offer various other training sessions that mentors can attend, such as Pastorally Supporting LGBTQ+ Young People and RAISE.

Mentor Support

All mentors are well supported and valued in their role. They receive regular supervision from the Starfish Co-ordinator, who they can talk to at any time with questions or concerns.

They will also have access to mentoring resources, either physical resources such as pens, games and equipment, as well as a library of mentoring activity ideas via SharePoint. SharePoint also contains all the mentoring documents and the secure storage for all data related to mentees.

Starfish mentors are part of the wider Starfish community via training opportunities, online gatherings and a designated Facebook group.



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