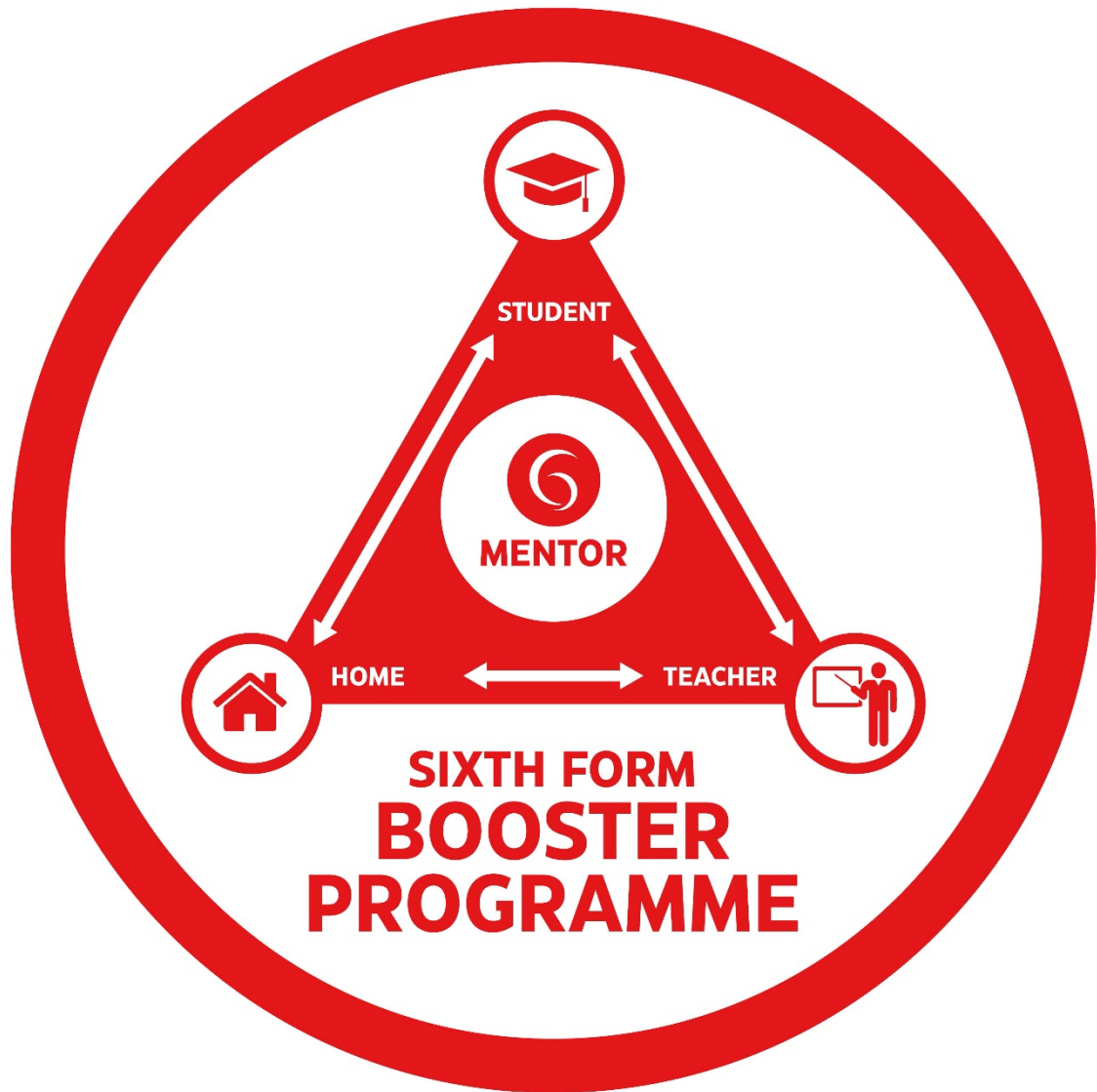# The Sixth Form Booster Programme

1 - Introduction

The Sixth Form Booster Programme exists to promote achievement at key points in a student's journey, taking a variety of forms (Brondyk and Searby, 2013). In part, this has been developed to lessen the attainment gap within The Sixth Form, an area of national focus (Sosu and Ellis, 2014) which has been brought into wider consideration following the disproportionate impact on attainment caused by the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, this programme aims to ensure that all students – whether the highest achievers or otherwise – achieve academic successes that they are capable of and realise their potential.

1.1 The Sixth Form Model

Mentoring at KS5 requires concerted effort toward communication and efficiency as students' study and learn in a wider variety of ways and geographical contexts that at previous key stages. In this way, learning becomes increasingly independent and therefore puts greater onus on the student; their character and skills, while parents and peers also play a considerable role. Interested parties in the process therefore must communicate effectively to ensure clear messages are communicated, goals set, and accountability upheld by all who involve themselves in the success of the individual student. The role of the mentor is to draw all these parties together and ensure that all are working toward the success of the child; challenging, championing and keeping all to account in their part played toward the students' success.

The program at Southmoor Academy Sixth Form can be broken down into discrete stages: Initiation, Organisation, Educational Health Check-Up, Goal-Setting and Goal-Tracking, Review and Transition. Each stage takes place between assessment windows / moments of data capture. These are flexible but follow a suggested outline, as given below.
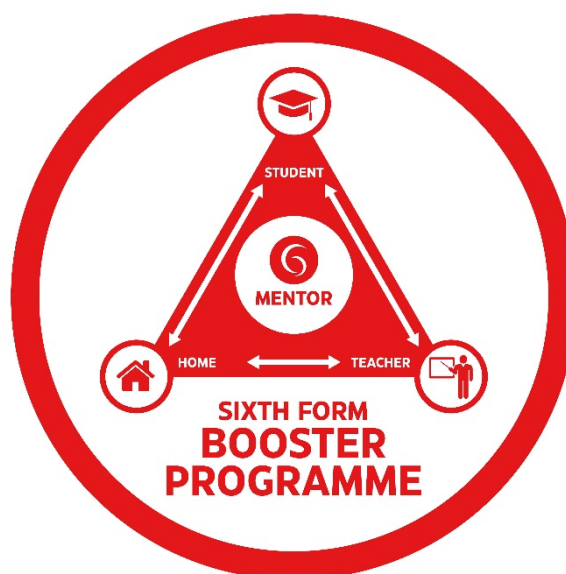
2 – Setting up your booster program

2.1 Initiation (week 0 since data entry)

Following data entry from an assessment window, students are referred to the mentoring scheme based on L3VA figures, matched to MEGs or Target Grades (this benchmark is adaptable). This can be set as required, for example, the bottom 20 students of a year group. The benchmark for this will depend on resources available (incl. staff) and requirements.

Alternatively, students can be referred to the program by parents or students themselves via the referral form in **Appendix 1**.

2.2 Organisation (week 0 since data entry)

Once a group of students has been designated, the program can be organised accordingly.

1. Firstly, **a 'class'** of these students is generated via Class Charts or SIMs. This will aid efficiency and reporting. This class should be timetabled as an additional *independent study period* and may be slit into two depending on timetabling, or placed outside of usual schooling hours.
2. Second, **121 meetings** are established with the students at a time that suits them and the mentor. The mentor should allow at least 20 minutes for these meetings. These can be altered at a later date if necessary. The mentor should factor in 'Admin' points to write up notes and review targets.

These two meetings need to be communicated with all students and written into their timetables and 'My Zone' planners. Attendance is to be made compulsory every week and an email reminder sent during the morning of the meeting. This may be automated through Office 365.

At this point and throughout the programme it is important that teachers and parents are contacted about mentoring arrangements. Parents may be notified by written letter or telephone contact.

2.3 Teacher Comments

While notifying teachers of the above arrangements in 2.3, a document should be made available on TEAMs allowing teachers to set initial targets and submit comments, as well as to view records of the meetings taking place between the student and mentor.

An example tracker is included in **Appendix 2**, taken from an excel format.

Contact home should be made via letter (example in Appendix C) or phone call to inform parents / careers of the mentoring process.

2.4 Educational Health Check-Up (Week 1 since data entry)

1. During the first 121 session the mentor should walk through the 'self-evaluation form' with the student mentee (**Appendix 3**). Once completed, the rest of the session should be spent discussing the students own evaluation.
2. The second part of the assessment form should be copied to the tracker, mentioned above (**Appendix 2**).

This stage is important in order for the student to feel empowered and take a greater degree of ownership over their development throughout the programme. This is especially key at KS5 where independence and a motivated attitude plays such a large role in success. Students who feel as though they had little part or say in target setting will soon become disengaged and demotivated.

It may be beneficial to communicate the rational of this stage with teachers in order to support buy-in to the programme.

2.5 Goal Setting (Week 2 since data entry)

Once initial meetings have been completed student comments and teacher comments should be synthesised into clearly defined targets with short, medium and long-term success criteria by the mentor. For example;

Issue: Poor record of independent work and engagement in Psychology lessons

- Short (two weeks): ATL to increase by 1
- Medium (one half term): Detailed Revision notes for each Psychology lesson, seen by AB after each lesson

- Long (by next assessment point): Achieve a grade C in November mock exam, with 20/25 marks on Psychology essay questions – achieving marks in A03 requirements.

During your second meeting with mentees, these targets should be communicated, and the student should be encouraged to generate their own Accountable Actions and Accountable Asks (AA's). These are then added to the tracker (**Appendix 2**) and teachers notified.

<u>Accountable Actions:</u> agreed actions that the student will undertake to reach the long-term targets set. The mentor will keep the student accountable to these during weekly meetings.

<u>Accountable Asks:</u> What the student has asked of the mentor, which the student will keep their mentor accountable to carrying out on their behalf, reviewed at weekly meetings.

It is important that these are mutual, and the student feels both empowered and supported by the goals set. They must be achievable while challenging, using both targets set by teachers and the student themselves.

Once targets are set, the table in Appendix 2 should be shared with parents in an appropriate manor, for example in the letter template of **Appendix 4.**

2.6 Goal Reporting (week 3 since data entry)

To aid accountability to the AA's it is important that teacher feedback to the mentor is regular and quantifiable. You may choose to do this by setting all mentor students on a 'report' e.g. via Class Charts. AA's should be set as parameters of this report, allowing teachers to quickly and easily feedback to the mentor any progress, or lack thereof, made by the mentee, in real time.

For example, a student who is set an AA of 0% late homework, would be flagged as failing to complete their report if homework was submitted late. The mentor would be able to realise this instantly and action could be swiftly implemented to rectify this issue.

Alternatively, the tracker in Appendix 2, may be altered to allow teachers to opportunity to comment on progress.

Failure to complete an AA's should be met with an appropriate, but proportionate consequence. At present, weekly detentions are reported to the HOY for Friday period 6, and after school and may escalate to 'Frozen Frees' that requires a student to work quietly during all free periods over a period of one week.

Mentors should be cautious of sanctions so as not to lose the trust and motivation for mentees. This should be implemented alongside a restorative conversation where the mentee understands that the sanction is not punitive but restorative, to keep them on track to achieving the goals they have set alongside the mentor.

Any sanctions should always be effectively communicated with subject teachers and parents / carers.

3 – Running the Programme

As the Booster Programme is built to be highly specified to the individual, the activities undertaken throughout the course of mentoring will look different for all. However, a suggested catalogue of resource materials (or 'boost activities') and their use are outlined below to address specific issues.

3.1.1 Revision Timetables (The 'When')

Factoring in when students will complete 4 – 6 hours per subject, per week, of independent work; around other commitments. This is a template to follow week-on-week

3.1.2 Revision Lists (The 'What')

Listing content in chronological order (start of year 12 to present day) in a list that keeps growing before rating how well it is understood before and after revision. This should be done in tandem with the subject syllabus.

3.1.3 Independent Work Tracker (The 'How Much')

Using the weekly timetables in 3.1.1 but as a diary for students to track how much ind. work they actually do, and when, throughout a given week.

3.1.4 Revision bootcamp resources (The 'How')

Working through a booklet of revision techniques and reviewing what works best for what

3.1.5 Effective Learning Methods (The 'How')

Using psychological research and 'the learning pyramid' to shape patterns of revision that use a range of different active skills (e.g. recall, repetition, teaching, creating).

3.1.6 Aspire Activities (The 'Why')

Considering motivation, how it is built and what it is not. Where students lack a 'next step' supporting them to consider their aspirations for future employment or study

3.1.7 Worry Diaries and Mood Trackers

For students that get stressed, anxious, or depressed easily worry diaries can be a simple, but effective way to manage worry and prevent it from consuming an individual. In cooperation with the Sixth Form Emotional Health and Resilience Nurse. Mood tracking can also highlight where, and when students are best placed to take on new information or revise.

3.1.8 Sleeping, Eating and Resting

A video and series of questions that help to consider the impact of sleep, regular rest and eating/drinking well on our brains. This will help students to create a manageable, healthy routine of revision and independent work that may even see them 'doing less' with more gain

3.1.9 Organising for Success

'Don't work harder, work smarter'. Methods of managing time and organising work that will make revision more straight forward and effective.

3.2 Using the time

Most mentoring programs will run in 8 – 10 week blocks between assessment windows (not including school holidays). It may be beneficial to calendar your intervention across this period with 'mid-term' assessments built into the program to give the student and mentor a sense of whether intervention is working or not. An example outline of the programmes running can be seen below, for a student who struggles mostly with organising their independent work:

> *Week 1: Introductions and self-assessment*
>
> *Week 2: Target setting / review and calendar outline. Tasks set to complete an independent work diary*
>
> *Week 3: Review Ind. work diary and create template revision timetable with mentee. Progress to targets reviewed. Task set to complete 3x revision lists.*
>
> *Week 4: Review revision lists and progress of targets. Discuss how student has kept to revision template. Outline how lists and templates can work together. Tasks – create a week-by-week timetable of revision using topics from revision lists*
>
> *Week 5: Review week of revision and set tasks to complete a new timetable for the coming week. Check with mentee if they are confident in their revision techniques. Discuss revision pyramid. Tasks – to apply revision pyramid to topics this week. **Consider running a revision bootcamp for all mentees.***
>
> *Week 6: **Mid – Term Assessments** in all subjects. Check with student if they feel that their new revision routines and methods are working successfully. If no, discuss trying new techniques in line with the revision pyramid.*
>
> *Week 7: **Parental meeting** and feedback based on mid-term assessments, teacher comments and mentor observations. Go through assessment papers and support with methods of processing feedback / marked work to achieve success*
>
> *Week 8: Evaluate progress so far – have short- and medium-term targets been kept? Check in on revision methods. How are students feeling about up-coming mock/official external exams?*
>
> *Week 9: Wellbeing check-in, and final 'big gains' before sitting exam papers. Discuss exam questions, techniques, command words and understanding the spec. Tasks; to plan answers through an exam paper for each subject of study*
>
> *Week 10: Assessment Window (internal or external) – wellbeing check in throughout.*
>
> *Week 11: Evaluation; will mentoring continue?*

4 - Parental Support

As previously mentioned, parental 'buy-in' to the booster programme must be sought at all points and communication with parents / carers must be frequent.

Six to Seven weeks into the booster programme (following timetabled mid-term assessments and depending on the length of time between assessment windows) parents should attend a face-to-face meeting with the mentor, students, and appropriate teachers, to review the progress made over a relatively short period. Are they keeping to AA's at home

5 - Evaluating

Following an assessment, a new round of data will be generated, internally or externally, which will judge students on the booster programme by their long-term targets.

5.1 A Continuation

If students have not met their targets or continue to be eligible for the mentor programme based on pre-decided criteria, they should remain on the programme for another 8-10 weeks. In this case, during the week 1 self-evaluation, the mentor should walk with the student through the re-evaluation work sheet (**Appendix 5**). It should be emphasised that this is not a failure, but that repeat evaluation is an independent activity that is valuable to making significant progress by refining and re-shaping processes.

5.2 Ending the Programme

If a student has met, or surpassed their long-term targets and no longer sits in the pre-defined mentoring group (e.g. bottom 20 students of L3VA scores), and no longer believes they will benefit from the support of a mentor, then they fill out an exit evaluation form (**Appendix 6**). This is an important process to consolidate what the student has learnt and achieved and what they should seek to continue, and advance before the next assessment window.

6 – Conclusion

The effectiveness of 121 mentoring programmes such as the Sixth Form booster programme is debated (Brondyk and Searby, 2013). However, the data captured from trialling this programme from December 2021 to June 2022 painted a conclusive picture of the worth of such a programme (see **Appendix 7**; changes in L3VA and ATL between assessment windows).

What was clear in this trial was that students who engaged positively with the programme made the most significant progress, while students that lacked 'buy-in' made much lesser progress. In successive programmes the emphasis should focus here – using firmer forms of intervention and holistic support to motivate a more open-hearted approach to such intervention.

While the activities outlined and procedures given are simple, the booster programme is time consuming and schools should be aware of the time commitment this may take, and factor that into staffs own directed time. This said, mentors do not need to be teaching staff and mentors can be garnered from a range of school-based personnel.

For this reason, it is strongly suggested that, where possible, more mentors supporting less students each takes precedence over smaller numbers of mentors taking on larger numbers of mentees at KS5.

References:

- Brondyk, S. and Searby, L., 2013. Best practices in mentoring: Complexities and possibilities. International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education.
- Sosu, E. and Ellis, S., 2014. *Closing the attainment gap in Scottish education*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Appendix 1: Student Self-Referral

This self-referral form should be completed a student seeking support for their studies via the Sixth Form Booster programme. While a teacher or adult may assist in this form, it is encouraged that the student make their decisions based on their own beliefs and goals.

Name:
Form Group:
Current Grades (from last mock exam or official external examination):
Personal Target Grades:
Explain briefly why you are completing this referral?

How would you score your skills in the following areas, between 1 (terrible) and 5 (brilliant)?:

☐ Time Management

☐ Self-Discipline

☐ Independent Working

☐ Self-Care and Wellbeing

☐ Ability to retain information (e.g. when revising)

☐ Exam Technique and performance

Please describe briefly, the kind of support that you seek from the Sixth Form Booster Programme?

Appendix 2: Target Tracker

Adam Jones, Initial Targets.

	ATL as 11th Nov' 2021	Mock Result Nov' 2021	Target Grades	Self-Assessed Targets	Teacher Assessed Targets	Mentor Targets	Time Frame (S/M/L)	Strategy of support to realise success	Success will like:
Geography	3	D	B	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)			
History	1	B	B	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)			
Media Studies	2	D	B	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)			
Other Comments:									

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Southmoor Academy Booster Program
Student Self-Assessment Form

Mentee: _____Mentor: _____

Please assess yourself on each of the following identifiers and then score each one from 1 to 10 (1 = Not True, 5 = Somewhat True, 10 = Confidently True)

<u>Mentoring Checklist</u>

Content

- ☐ My revision is systematic and works through a list of content

- ☐ I follow curriculum timelines and have a well-balanced understanding of my subjects

- ☐ I am confident in my knowledge of:

- ☐ I am confident in my knowledge of:

- ☐ I am confident in my knowledge of:

- ☐ I have read and understand the syllabus for all subjects

Skill

- ☐ I am confident in answering exam questions for all of my subjects

☐   I am familiar with exam papers and what mark schemes are asking of me, for all of my subjects

☐   I am able to create resources that support my recall of key information

☐   My research skills are strong and help me to engage with content beyond the curriculum that is useful to me

☐   My timekeeping and exam skills are strong

☐   I have a thorough understanding of command words and am able to understand and respond to what a question is asking of me

Independent Learning

☐   I have a revision timetable that is effective

☐   I use a handful of revision methods that I am confident work well

☐   I am completing 5-6 hours of independent work per subject per week, or more

☐   I know what I need to do to improve in all my subjects and have focused my revision here

☐   I commit to completing homework to a high standard

☐ Homework is always handed in on time

Wellbeing

☐ I have somewhere quiet to work where I feel productive

☐ I get at least 7 hours sleep per night

☐ I feel positive about myself and my future

☐ I am well supported at home / by those around me

☐ My mental health is good, and I am easily self-motivated in my work

☐ I have a balanced diet of food and drink

Character

☐ I am able to keep myself away from distractions when I work

☐ I am able to relax on a regular basis and 'switch off'

☐ I feel comfortable asking for support from the relevant sources when I need it

☐ I undertake paid work for less than 12 hours per week

☐ My attendance and punctuality are good

☐   I am making the most of all support offered to me (e.g. attending revision sessions)

Overall Score
Content: / 30

Skill: / 30

Ind. Working   / 30

Wellbeing: / 30

Character: /30

Total:

Barriers To Success

Subject 1:	Barriers to improvement:	Targets to overcome barriers:
Subject 2:	Barriers to improvement:	Targets to overcome barriers:
Subject 3:	Barriers to improvement:	Targets to overcome barriers:

Appendix 4: Letter Template to Parents

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing to follow up on a previous conversation, discussing the Sixth Form Booster Programme that [STUDENT NAME] has begun at The Sixth Form. This programme is designed to give students the 121, individualised support they need to succeed in realising their goals at A-Level and beyond. As such they are given a mentor, [MENTOR NAME], who they will meet regularly to discuss their progress by agreed goals between them and their teachers.

These goals are outlined below:

	ATL as 11th Nov' 2021	Mock Result Nov' 2021	Target Grades	Self-Assessed Targets	Teacher Assessed Targets	Mentor Targets	Time Frame (S/M/L)	Strategy of support to realise success	Success will look like:
Geography	3	D	B	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)			
History	1	B	B	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)			
Media Studies	2	D	B	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)			
Other Comments:									

It is our commitment at The Sixth Form to support all students to reach their goals by coordinating support in school and at home. For this reason, please do not hesitate to keep in touch via the details below if you would like further clarity about this process or your crucial part to play in its success.

Thank you for supporting The Sixth Form and your child in what is an exciting, but challenging stage of life.

Yours,

Over the mentoring period, what went well?:

Content:

Skill:

Independent Learning and Revision:

Attitude/Character:

Wellbeing:

Over the mentoring period, what did not go well?:

Content:

Skill:

Independent Learning and Revision:

Attitude/Character:

Wellbeing:

Exam Analysis Report (Gap Analysis)

	Subject 1:	Subject 2:	Subject 3:
Where did I pick up marks?	•	•	•
Where did I drop marks?	•	•	•
Targets to focus on	•	•	•
Accountable actions and asks that will make a change	•	•	•

Appendix 6: Student Exit Evaluation

Date:

	New Grades	Target Grades	Self-Assessed Targets	Teacher Assessed Targets	Mentor Targets	How this has been met
Subject 1:			1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	
Subject 2:			1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	
Subject 3:			1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	1) 2) 3)	
Other Comments:						

What has contributed to my success?

-
-
-
-
-
-

What barriers to further success are ahead of me?

-
-
-
-
-
-

What areas will I need to continue focusing on, in order to achieve further success?

    Content:

    Skill:

    Independent Learning and Revision:

    Attitude/Character:

    Wellbeing:

What further support would you like from your mentor or other members of Sixth Form staff?

Mentor Comment:

Mentor Signature:

Student Signature: