

Professional Practice Standards for Learning Mentors

(Including Lead Learning Mentors)

These Professional Practice Standards define the expectations for Learning Mentors working at Orchard Therapeutic Farm (OTF). They are used to inform performance management, supervision, appraisal, professional development and capability procedures.

The standards apply to all Learning Mentors and Lead Learning Mentors and should be read alongside:

- the Learning Mentor Job Description
- the Performance Management Policy
- the Code of Conduct
- the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

These standards describe **how the role is carried out**, as well as what is delivered, and reflect OTF's therapeutic, relational and inclusive model.

Standard 1: Professional Conduct, Boundaries and Safeguarding

Learning Mentors are expected to:

- Consistently demonstrate professional, respectful and ethical conduct in all interactions with children, colleagues, families and external professionals.
 - Model calm, emotionally regulated behaviour and clear communication, particularly when supporting dysregulated or anxious learners.
 - Maintain clear professional and therapeutic boundaries at all times.
 - Uphold safeguarding responsibilities, including timely reporting, accurate recording and appropriate escalation of concerns.
 - Contribute to a culture of safety, dignity and trust across the farm.
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Standard 2: Therapeutic and Values-Led Practice

Learning Mentors are expected to demonstrate Orchard Therapeutic Farm's values through daily professional practice by:

- Delivering personalised support, adapting activities, communication and expectations to meet individual needs, strengths and stages of development.
- Creating engaging, purposeful and therapeutic environments that promote curiosity, connection and emotional safety.
- Empowering children and young people through appropriate choice, responsibility and opportunities for independence and leadership.
- Demonstrating reflective practice, including evaluating the impact of their approach and adjusting practice in response to supervision and feedback.
- Upholding safety, nurture and dignity, ensuring all children feel respected, secure and valued.

Values-led practice is assessed through observable behaviour and impact, not personal beliefs or personality.

Standard 3: Relational Practice and the Child's Voice

Learning Mentors are expected to:

- Build trusting, consistent and attuned relationships with children and young people.
 - Apply understanding of SEMH, EBSA, SEND, trauma and neurodiversity to support regulation and engagement.
 - Treat behaviour as communication and respond using consistent, therapeutic and de-escalating strategies.
 - Prioritise the child's voice, encouraging expression, participation and shared decision-making where appropriate.
 - Support children to develop confidence, resilience and emotional awareness over time.
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Standard 4: Planning, Delivery and Learning Environment

Learning Mentors are expected to:

- Plan and deliver purposeful sessions for individuals and small groups (typically 1–3 learners).
 - Contribute to learning experiences that reflect EHCP outcomes, vocational pathways and therapeutic goals.
 - Create safe, well-managed and stimulating environments that support participation and appropriate risk-taking.
 - Adapt delivery to ensure learning is accessible, flexible and responsive.
 - Work collaboratively with teachers, mentors and support staff to deliver inclusive and coherent provision.
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Standard 5: Assessment, Progress and Outcomes

Learning Mentors are expected to:

- Monitor progress using observation, reflection and informal assessment.
 - Contribute to tracking, reporting and review processes, including EHCP annual reviews where appropriate.
 - Support children to work towards agreed outcomes, including vocational qualifications, functional skills and personal development goals.
 - Provide accurate information to inform reports, reviews and transition planning.
 - Maintain appropriate records that support accountability and continuity of care.
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Standard 6: Collaboration, Communication and Whole-Farm Contribution

Learning Mentors are expected to:

- Work effectively as part of a multidisciplinary team, contributing to consistent and joined-up practice.
 - Communicate professionally with families, carers, social workers and partner agencies where required.
 - Participate in briefings, reviews and operational routines that support consistency, safety and quality.
 - Engage positively in the wider life of the farm, including enrichment activities, events and curriculum development.
 - Model positive professional behaviour and contribute to a supportive team culture.
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Standard 7: Reflective Practice and Professional Development

Learning Mentors are expected to:

- Engage openly and constructively in supervision, performance reviews and reflective discussions.
 - Respond positively to feedback and implement agreed actions to improve practice.
 - Participate in training and CPD relevant to role expectations, individual need and service priorities.
 - Demonstrate commitment to learning, growth and maintaining professional standards over time.
 - Take responsibility for their own development and wellbeing.
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Standard 8: Leadership and Responsibility

(Additional expectations for Lead Learning Mentors)

Lead Learning Mentors are additionally expected to:

- Provide consistent day-to-day guidance and support to Learning Mentors.
- Model values-led, therapeutic and reflective practice across the team.
- Support induction, coaching and development of less experienced staff.
- Contribute to quality assurance processes and monitoring of practice.
- Work with senior leaders to maintain high standards of provision, safety and care.

Use of These Standards

These standards are used to:

- set performance expectations
- inform 6-weekly reviews, supervision and appraisal
- identify development and support needs
- guide capability or disciplinary procedures where required

Meeting these standards is an ongoing professional requirement for all Learning Mentors at Orchard Therapeutic Farm.