

# Online Mentoring – Explore your Future!

## Parent/Guardian/Carer Information Leaflet

### Introduction

STEM Learning's National Online Mentoring programme runs in partnership with [Brightside](#) and aims to help **13–19 year-olds** explore their future career options in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

Young people taking part will receive:

- **one to one support** and inspiration from a STEM Ambassador mentor
- **support and resources** to help them make informed decisions about their future.

### What does it involve?

Mentoring for Years 9/10/11 or S3/S4 focuses on providing career insights into sectors of interest for the young person. Years 12/13 or S5/S6 receive mentoring on 'life after school', whether that be Higher Education, Apprenticeships or preparing for employment.

Students can message their mentor at any time during the 10-week mentoring period (see website for [dates of the next cohort](#)) and mentors will reply as soon as they can. Conversations take place via text-based messaging, a bit like email, so **mentors and mentees do not need to be online at the same time.**

STEM Ambassador mentors are ready to answer questions on topics such as the range of STEM career or education options available to young people, the **pathways into different sectors** and the essential **professional skills** required for success. Students also have access to a suite of fun and fascinating "Bright Knowledge" resources on matters such as health and wellbeing, independent living, money and housing to help prepare them for the future.



## How does the mentoring take place safely?

We use a **bespoke mentoring platform**, Brightside Mentoring, that is purely text-based to ensure all young people are appropriately safeguarded. All messages submitted via this platform are **automatically filtered** and if any “stop” conditions are flagged (e.g. attachments, web links, special characters like “@” that potentially indicate an email address etc.), the message is then manually **reviewed and moderated** by a person. If needed, the sender may be asked to amend their message before it is re-checked and sent on.

To protect all mentees and mentors on this programme, Brightside staff and the Project staff for Online Mentoring at STEM Learning have access to all conversations. In addition to the automatic filtering of messages, **spot checks** are carried out to ensure mentoring discussions are appropriate.

Please ensure your child is aware of the following:

- Messages to their mentor are NOT private but will only be seen by their mentor and staff administering the programme unless there is a serious safeguarding concern.
- If they type a “stop” word in their message that raises concerns about their safety, mental health or wellbeing, Brightside may contact their teacher or school. “Stop” words can include references to feeling stressed, worried or anxious.
- If Brightside feels the mentee is at immediate risk of serious harm, they may contact local children’s services/Multiagency Safeguarding Hubs.

The mentors on this programme are all STEM Ambassadors who have undergone a **criminal record check** (DBS or PVG) and received training where they are informed no email addresses or personal contact information can be exchanged. **Mentees and mentors are not allowed to meet in person** – all mentoring must occur via the Brightside platform.



Your child does need to provide an email address to create an account on the platform, but this information is not shared with their mentor or anyone else. Please read [Brightside's Privacy Policy](#) for further information about the personal information collected and how this is used. You can also read STEM Learning's Privacy Policy [here](#).

### **What do I need to do?**

An educator known to your child has identified this programme as a beneficial opportunity for them to take part in so will be supporting them with next steps. Please simply encourage your child to ask any/all questions they may have so they can get the most out of this experience.

Occasionally the email invitation for your child to sign-up to the Brightside mentoring platform may go into their spam/junk folder so please remind them to check this if they haven't received it.

If you have any questions, please contact STEM Learning via [students@stem.org.uk](mailto:students@stem.org.uk)

