



Mentorship: Pairing & Contact

A safeguarding and conduct policy for the personal mentorship model

Companion to the Founding Prospectus and Curriculum | Draft v0.3 | Spring 2026

Why this policy exists

The Fellowship takes only seven people and knows each of them personally, with their families involved. Mentorship is one-to-one and intensive, and because the cohort is global, the programme is delivered entirely online, with every live session recorded. In this first iteration the Founder is the sole Personal Mentor, working directly with all seven Fellows, complemented by guest sessions from some of the most accomplished Muslims in security across the world, and direct access to the Oxford and Cambridge community. That closeness is the point, and it is also a responsibility. This policy defines how mentoring relationships are formed and how contact is conducted, so that the relationship is always a strength and never a risk. It sits beneath the full safeguarding and child-protection policy in the Founding Prospectus and does not replace it; where the two touch, the Prospectus governs. It takes effect only when read and signed by the mentor, the mentee, and the mentee's parent or guardian. Provisions for anyone under eighteen are mandatory.

1 Scope and Roles

This policy covers everyone in a mentoring relationship within the Fellowship: Fellows, the people who mentor and teach them, their families, and the staff who oversee the work.

Roles

Personal Mentor

Each Fellow's primary, ongoing one-to-one relationship: a leading practitioner who teaches the Fellow directly. In the first iteration, this is the Founder, for all seven Fellows. Vetted, trained, and bound by this policy.

Guest Speakers

Leading practitioners and researchers who give occasional guest sessions to the whole cohort. Group, observable and recorded; never one-to-one mentors.

Programme Lead

Owns pairing decisions and re-pairing; first point for any difficulty in a relationship.

Designated Safe-guarding Lead (DSL)

Holds child-protection responsibility, with a trained deputy. Receives and acts on all safeguarding concerns.

Family Guardian

A partner in the work. For Fellows under eighteen, consent and involvement are required.

2 Vetting Before Any Contact

No one mentors or teaches a Fellow before vetting is complete. In summary (the full requirements are in the Prospectus): two satisfactory references; recognised safeguarding training; signing the Code of Conduct; and, for anyone working with Fellows under eighteen, an Enhanced DBS check including the Children's Barred List, plus an overseas Certificate of Good Conduct for any country lived in for six months or more in the past five years.

3 Pairing

3.1 Who mentors whom

In this first iteration the matter is simple: the Founder is the sole Personal Mentor and works directly with all seven Fellows, so there is no matching to be done. As the programme grows and further mentors join in later cohorts, Fellows will be matched on three grounds, **specialism** (depth in the Fellow's area), **goals** (where the Fellow is heading) and **fit** (temperament and working style), with the family consulted. The observable conditions in this section apply identically whether there is one mentor or many.

3.2 One-to-one, but never in private

This is an exclusive and personal programme, so mentorship is genuinely one-to-one. It is never, however, *private*. Because the programme runs entirely online, because every session is recorded, and because a parent or guardian is welcome to monitor, no mentoring meeting is ever a closed room.

The rule

One-to-one mentorship takes place only in observable conditions: online, recorded, open to the Programme to review and to the family to monitor. This is how *khalwa*, the private seclusion of a man and a woman who are not *mahram*, is taken into account and avoided. The safeguard is not the gender of the pairing; it is that nothing happens unseen. Women and men are mentored with equal depth, and the same recorded, observable conditions apply to everyone, every time.

3.3 Load, independence and re-pairing

- In the inaugural cohort the Founder deliberately carries all seven Fellows; the intimacy of the programme at this scale is the point. As the mentor pool grows in future cohorts, each mentor's load is kept deliberately low.
- Because in this first iteration the sole mentor is also the Founder, an **independent** Designated Safeguarding Lead, and an independent route for raising concerns, are maintained, so that no Fellow or family ever has to bring a problem only to the person it concerns.
- Conflicts of interest are checked and declared; a mentor does not take on someone with whom they have a prior private relationship that would compromise the role.
- Where there are several mentors, re-pairing is no-fault and arranged through the Programme. Fit matters more than face-saving.

4 Contact Protocols**4.1 Channels**

The programme is delivered entirely online. All contact runs through the Fellowship's approved channels, where it is logged and, for live sessions, recorded without exception. This is not bureaucracy; it is what keeps every party safe and every interaction reviewable.

Channel	Allowed	Conditions
Platform messaging (logged)	Yes	Default for asynchronous contact, for everyone
Scheduled video on the platform	Yes	The channel for one-to-one mentorship; recorded for everyone, every time, and open to family monitoring
Moderated group / cohort space	Yes	Open and observable; the home of group learning and discussion
Personal phone, email, social media, DMs, off-platform apps	No	Prohibited between mentors and Fellows. Absolute for minors

4.2 Cadence and responsiveness

- During the intensive, a weekly scheduled one-to-one with the Personal Mentor, plus asynchronous support between sessions and weekly open clinics.
- A reasonable response-time norm (for example, within one to two working days) for asynchronous messages, set so that Fellows are supported without mentors being on call.
- Families receive updates at defined intervals, and a parent or guardian is welcome to monitor sessions. For Fellows under eighteen, this visibility is part of the safeguarding regime and is retained throughout.

4.3 Conduct of a session

Sessions are purposeful and professional, with a clear focus. Every session is online and recorded, for every Fellow, every time, and a parent or guardian is welcome to monitor. No meeting is ever a closed, private room, which is how the requirement of *khalwa* is honoured for everyone. What a Fellow shares in confidence is respected, with the single exception of anything that raises a safeguarding concern, which is always acted upon.

5 Boundaries

Never, under any circumstances

- No private, unrecorded, or off-platform contact with any Fellow; every session is recorded and observable. This is absolute for Fellows under eighteen.
- No romantic or sexual conduct of any kind, in any direction. This ends the relationship with the Fellowship immediately and is reported.
- No sharing of personal contact details to circumvent the platform.
- No financial dealings: no lending, borrowing, soliciting, or transactions; no gifts beyond the token and symbolic.
- No use of the relationship for personal, commercial or reputational gain.
- No pressure of any kind, including on a person's private religious practice; the ethos is offered, never imposed.
- No harshness, ridicule, or breach of a Fellow's confidence.

6 Guest Sessions

Beyond the personal mentorship, the Fellowship brings leading practitioners and researchers to the cohort through occasional **guest sessions**: talks, masterclasses and question-and-answer time. This is how Fellows learn directly from some of the best in the field.

- **Group, not one-to-one.** Guest sessions are delivered to the whole cohort. Guests are not Personal Mentors; they hold no one-to-one relationship with any Fellow and have no private contact with them.
- **Observable and recorded.** Like everything else, guest sessions are online, observable and recorded, and run through the platform.
- **Vetting and boundaries.** Any guest with repeated or close access to Fellows under eighteen is vetted to the full standard in Section 2, and the boundaries in Section 5 apply to guests in full. Guests agree to the Code of Conduct before any session.

7 Safeguarding and Escalation

If something is wrong

Any concern, however small or uncertain, goes to the DSL without delay and in writing. Mentors are mandatory reporters of safeguarding concerns and may not promise to keep such a disclosure secret. For Fellows under eighteen the observable-contact rule is absolute, and serious concerns may require involving the Fellow's family and, where appropriate, statutory services. Concerns are documented, and acting in good faith on a concern is always protected.

8 Records, Privacy and Review

Messages and session recordings are retained in line with the Fellowship's data-protection policy and the Children's Code, with the minimum personal data necessary and clear retention limits. Mentors and guest speakers do not collect or keep Fellows' personal contact details outside the platform. This policy is owned jointly by the DSL and the Programme Lead, and reviewed at least annually and after any incident.

9 Agreement and Signatures

This policy is a framework, and it takes effect only once it has been read, understood and signed by all three parties to the mentoring relationship. Before any contact begins, the **mentor**, the **mentee**, and the mentee's **parent or guardian** each sign below, alongside the Code of Conduct. Signing is the condition of the relationship, and the signed copy is retained by the Programme.

The Mentor

Name and signature

Date

The Mentee (the Fellow)

Name and signature

Date

The Parent or Guardian

Name and signature

Date