

Trainee Transfer, Extension, Deferral and Withdrawal Policy

Audience:	Trainees on REAch Teach Primary Partnership Initial Teacher Training courses REAch2 Staff
Ratified:	SCITT Oversight Board June 2024
Other related policies:	Safeguarding, including Safer Recruitment Disciplinary Health and Safety Complaints Admissions Trainee Progress and Assessment Trainee Attendance and Engagement
Policy owner:	Gill Ellyard, Director of Education
Review:	Every 3 years

At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones.



Leadership

Finding the leader in all of us.



Inclusion

Realising the greatness in our difference.



Learning

Creating exceptional opportunities for learning.



Enjoyment

Loving what we do.



Inspiration

Feeling the power of the possible.



Integrity

Being courageously true to our purpose.



Responsibility

Unwavering commitment to seeing things through.

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Policy Overview

The REAch Teach School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programme is designed to last one academic year and comprises two placements in alternate key stages (one main placement school and one second placement school) in line with DfE [Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice](#). The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines and procedures for any request to adjust these parameters – through school transfers, extensions, deferral requests or withdrawal.

Definitions

- Trainee: An individual enrolled for initial teacher training on the REAch Teach SCITT programme.
- Transfer: The process of changing a trainee's main placement school to another placement school in response to a trainee request, placement school request or a SCITT team decision.
- Deferral: The postponement of a trainee's start date either before they are officially enrolled onto the programme or the pausing of a trainee's studies mid-academic year to recommence at a date in a subsequent academic year.
- Withdrawal: Can occur through various pathways including the trainee's voluntary termination of their enrolment in the programme, the failure to make progress through the REAch Teach Support Process (of which the ultimate outcome is failure and withdrawal), through Fitness to Practise processes or by default through non-attendance and non-communication with programme staff over a defined period of time (see REAch Teach Trainee Progress and Assessment policy for timescales).
- Placement school:
 - o Main placement school – The REAch Teach partnership school where the trainee is based for their Main Placement
 - o Second placement school – The REAch Teach partnership school where the trainee is based for their Second Placement

Policy in Detail

Trainee Transfers

Applicants for the REAch Teach SCITT programme identify a main placement school in their initial application made through the DfE's 'Apply' portal. The SCITT Team may suggest an alternative main placement school at any point during the recruitment process to ensure that all trainees receive the highest quality support that meets their individual needs. When REAch Teach formally offers a place on the programme, the applicant is informed of their intended main placement school and agree to that location. From that point, REAch Teach will make best endeavours to maintain that main placement location throughout the programme, dependent on the ongoing capacity for high quality support and training within the school.

Experience in two settings is an essential DfE compliance requirement for the award of QTS as outlined in [Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice \("DfE criteria"\)](#). Second placements are arranged by REAch Teach and provide a contrasting, complementary setting to the main placement at a school within the REAch Teach partnership. While securing a second placement which provides trainees with this contrasting experience is the priority, REAch Teach also seeks to minimise travel time as much as possible and will endeavour that travel time to second placement will not exceed one hour (calculated using Google Maps to arrive by 8.15am).

Placement transfers are not guaranteed due to school capacity and availability. They can negatively impact trainee progress due to the time taken to get to know a new class, mentor and placement

school policies, and therefore all requests will be considered with these factors at the forefront of decision-making. In addition, partnership schools make a firm commitment to providing a training environment for the trainee for the duration of their placement, and therefore it is expected that trainees respect this commitment and make the same commitment to that school in return. Placement in a suitable training environment, including support from a trained mentor, is an aspect of compliance for both the trainee (for the award of QTS) and for the REAch Teach programme in line with DFE Criteria. However, REAch Teach acknowledges that in exceptional circumstances, for good reason, either the school or trainee may request to end a placement and transfer the trainee to a different placement school. The guidance below applies to these exceptional cases.

It is important to note that decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and individual decisions do not set precedence for other trainee requests.

Transfer requests made by trainees

REAch Teach acknowledges that there are occasional exceptional circumstances whereby a trainee may make a request to transfer to a different main placement school. These requests must be made in writing to the REAch Teach National ITT Lead who will consider transfer requests on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the trainee's circumstances, the school's perspective and the availability of suitable training places (including a suitably trained mentor) at an alternative partnership school.

Acceptable reasons for trainee to request a transfer

- Unavoidable personal relocation of the trainee during the training year
- An unavoidable change in personal circumstances during the course of the programme, which is exacerbated by placement location, potentially impacting successful progression to recommendation for QTS
- Placement quality or irrevocable relationship breakdown between the trainee and the partnership school: if the trainee has concerns over the placement quality, it is expected that the trainee takes the responsibility to raise these concerns (in line with the REAch2 Complaints policy) with their Lead Mentor or Regional ITT Lead at the **earliest possible opportunity** so that measures can be put in place to address the issues. In the rarest of cases, and after a thorough phase of investigation and support, these may result in placement transfer.

Transfer requests made by placement schools

REAch Teach acknowledges that there are occasional exceptional circumstances whereby a school may make a request to end the placement and to transfer the trainee to an alternative main placement school. These requests must be made in writing to the REAch Teach National ITT Lead who will consider requests on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the trainee's circumstances, the school's perspective and the availability of suitable training places (including a suitably trained mentor) at an alternative partnership school.

Acceptable reasons for a school to request a trainee transfer

- Significant change to school staffing capacity in-year, including mentor or school leader absence or resignation
- An Ofsted inspection which results in a lack of capacity to support a trainee teacher
- Irrevocable relationship breakdown between the partnership school and the trainee or ongoing serious concerns over trainee progress and performance. If the school has concerns over the trainee's suitability/quality, it is expected that the school mentor or Head Teacher raises these concerns with their Lead Mentor or Regional ITT Lead at the **earliest possible**

opportunity in line with the process in Appendix 1 so that measures can be put in place to address the issues. In exceptional circumstances, these may result in placement transfer.

Other possible routes to a trainee transfer

In addition, main placement transfers may be initiated by the central REAch Teach SCITT team where it is agreed to be in the trainee's or school's best interest in line with the above parameters.

Arrangements for smooth transfer

The decision regarding the transfer request will be communicated to the trainee in writing within a reasonable timeframe, following appropriate investigations as outlined above.

If a transfer request is approved, the Regional ITT Lead will facilitate the transfer process in collaboration with the trainee's Lead Mentor and new placement school, including facilitating a handover and a transition/induction plan.

If a suitable alternative cannot be found

If the decision is made to transfer the trainee, every endeavour will be made to locate a suitable alternative placement school. It can not be guaranteed that this is possible for a range of factors (including requirements related to compliance, e.g. a trained mentor) and therefore a trainee acknowledges that a possible outcome from an approved transfer request may be that they will need to extend or defer their place on the training programme while a suitable training environment can be looked for.

Trainee Extensions

In exceptional cases, there may be circumstances whereby a trainee needs more time to progress or to collate the evidence of their progress. This may be due to absence (or other significant barrier to expected progress) which has impacted their time on placement, or their progress or evidence of their development (see Trainee Attendance and Engagement policy). In these exceptional circumstances, where a small period of time may support the trainee to attain QTS within that academic year, the Lead Mentor and Regional ITT Lead may agree that an extension can take place within the same academic year by delaying the final review, with the meeting to take place no later than the end of the third week of July.

An extension into the following academic year may be considered where trainees have had significant absence from the programme (such as illness or parental leave) which has impacted their progress either in their school practice or their understanding of the taught curriculum (including the self-directed tasks). Where absence is the factor impeding progress, or where a trainee has not completed 120 days in school, the maximum extension period would be the number of missed weeks, until such a time that they can evidence that they have met the expected standard for the end of the year against the REAch Teach Assessment Framework (REAch Teach Trainee Progress and Assessment policy). If the trainee's mentor and Lead Mentor agree that they meet the standard for recommendation for QTS and have the required evidence to demonstrate this, it is possible to be assessed at that point which, if successful, may reduce the total number of weeks of extension.

Trainee Deferrals

Trainees may request a deferral of their enrolment or progression within the programme due to extenuating circumstances such as illness, maternity/paternity leave, or significant personal reasons, in line with the REAch Teach Trainee Attendance and Engagement policy.

Deferral requests must be made in writing to the REAch Teach National ITT Lead, providing the reason for the request, the desired length of time away from the programme, and relevant

supporting documentation where necessary. The REAch Teach National ITT Lead will review deferral requests and may approve or deny them based on the circumstances provided.

Approved deferrals will be granted for a specified period agreed upon by both the trainee and the National ITT Lead, with timelines and parameters as outlined in the Trainee Attendance and Engagement policy. There may be an impact on Student Finance and it is the trainee's responsibility to clarify this with Student Finance England.

Trainees granted deferrals will be required to re-engage with the programme at the agreed-upon time and may be subject to additional requirements upon their return.

Trainee Withdrawals

Trainees who withdraw are responsible for fees up to that point (including a possible Exit Fee if withdrawal occurs before a fee-paying point), in line with the timescales outlined in the REAch Teach Trainee Fees policy. Trainees will be required to complete exit procedures, including an exit interview and the prompt return of any REAch Teach property or materials.

Trainee initiated: Voluntary withdrawal

Trainees may voluntarily withdraw from the programme at any time by providing written notice to the National ITT Lead by email to reachteach@reach2.org.

The National ITT Lead will acknowledge the withdrawal request and arrange for the necessary administrative processes (including notification to Student Finance England) to be completed within 10 working days of the request being received and acknowledged. The effective date of withdrawal will be the working day (or next working day if received on a weekend) of receipt of the written notification by the trainee.

REAch Teach initiated: Withdrawal through 'fail and withdraw'

For trainees who have been through all three stages of the REAch Teach Support Process (as outlined in the REAch Teach Trainee Progress and Assessment policy) and who have not made the necessary progress against their targets, the final outcome is that the trainee fails the programme and is withdrawn by the programme team. This is an exceptional outcome that would only occur after ongoing monitoring, support and feedback, and the trainee would be informed of this potential outcome as part of the latter stages of the process.

REAch Teach initiated: Withdrawal 'by default'

Where trainees have been absent from the programme without notice and are out of contact with the programme team, after a period of time they are deemed to have withdrawn by default. The timescales for this are outlined in the REAch Teach Trainee Engagement and Attendance policy.

REAch Teach initiated: Placement termination

A placement termination may occur in exceptional circumstances, due to a trainee's unacceptable breach/es of professional standards or other serious fitness to practise concerns.

Grounds for termination of placement may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Serious misconduct or behaviour that contravenes the professional standards expected of teachers (see REAch2 Disciplinary policy)
- b. Failure to meet Fitness to Practise requirements, including health and conduct concerns (see REAch Teach Fitness to Practice policy)
- c. Repeated and serious breaches of programme policies or regulations (see REAch2 Disciplinary policy)

- d. Conduct that causes a serious breach of Safeguarding guidelines (see REAch2 Disciplinary policy)

Before any decision is taken to terminate a placement due to the above concerns, an investigation will take place in line with the relevant policy.

The trainee will be informed in writing of the decision, the reasons for the termination, and the effective date of withdrawal.

The trainee will have the right to appeal the decision in accordance with the Complaints policy (see SCITT addendum in REAch2 Complaints policy)

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed **every 3 years** or sooner, taking into account any legislative changes. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Process for a school to request a trainee transfer (school withdrawing the placement)

REAch Teach trainees agree to, and sign, the REAch Teach Trainee Code of Conduct as part of the REAch Teach Trainee Contract. Together with the Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards, these outline the professional behaviours that trainees are expected to exemplify through the year.

The contract and code of conduct states clearly that trainees are expected to establish and maintain appropriate professional relationships with REAch Teach programme staff, school colleagues, peers, pupils, and all other people that they are in contact with during the course. Failure in this area may result in a trainee's place on the programme being terminated.

Concerns raised by REAch Teach

The REAch Teach Support Process outlines the appropriate procedures for dealing with ongoing progress concerns. The REAch2 Disciplinary policy outlines the appropriate procedures for dealing with misconduct. The REAch Teach Fitness to Practice process outlines the appropriate procedures for other concerns, such as character, professional competence or health.

Concerns raised by the placement school

Concerns about a trainee's progress, conduct or fitness to practice often first arise during school placements when trainees interact with staff and pupils. REAch Teach has clear processes in place for giving feedback to trainees to allow for any concerns to be brought to their attention promptly.

Where initial concerns about a trainee's professional relationships have emerged through the placement school, the mentor or, if appropriate, the Head Teacher should contact the REAch Teach Lead Mentor with details of the concern(s). At this stage, the trainee's attention should be drawn to these concerns, and the relevant process should be followed (the Support Plan process, Disciplinary or Fitness to Practise).

As part of their partnership agreement, the placement school is asked to support the full REAch Teach Support Process (see Trainee Progress and Assessment policy).

If the school feel that they are unable to continue to provide the trainee with a placement, the Head Teacher of the school should contact the National ITT Lead with the detailed evidence which has led colleagues at the school to have serious, ongoing concerns about the trainee. The evidence provided by the school will need to show a clear and documented audit trail which identifies the nature of the problem/s, including written records of meetings between school colleagues and the trainee, and targets which have been set up to enable the trainee to act on the feedback. Evidence from Lead Mentor visits will also likely to be relevant. It should be clear from this how trainees have been kept informed with clear feedback in writing at each point.

The National ITT lead will arrange to meet with the trainee to present the trainee with the details of the serious professional concerns that have been raised by the school and gain their perspective at the earliest possible opportunity. Significant weight is given to the professional opinion of staff at the placement, but the REAch Teach team will also listen impartially to the trainee's account of what happened on the placement and investigate any factual disputes or allegations that the trainee has not been treated fairly. The trainee should be informed that the school has requested that the trainee be transferred. This meeting will seek to establish the facts from the trainee's perspective and give the trainee an opportunity to provide any contrary evidence. Where possible, the trainee's Lead Mentor and/or Regional ITT Lead will also attend the meeting. The meeting will also check and

ensure that all aspects of the REAch Teach programme compliance have been in place from the trainee's perspective (e.g. mentoring and training requirements met). The trainee will be given the opportunity to prepare for this meeting and will be given the opportunity to present and talk through the evidence which they wish to put forward in support of their position.

The National ITT Lead, in consultation with the trainee's Lead Mentor and/or Regional ITT Lead, will consider the evidence from both the school and the trainee to determine whether the school's decision to terminate the placement is justified. If this decision is in favour of the trainee, the National ITT Lead will make clear to the trainee that, given the breakdown in relationship between the trainee and colleagues in school, a return to the original school will not be possible. In this situation, the National ITT Lead will proceed with arrangements to secure an alternative placement school for the trainee. In the period where a new placement is being sought, the trainee will be paused on the programme, which may require an extension to the training year to make up this time missed. It must be noted that while the very best endeavours of REAch Teach will be put into finding an alternative placement for a trainee, it can not be guaranteed which may lead to a trainee being deferred or ultimately withdrawn from the programme.

If the school's evidence is clearly presented and demonstrates how the trainee has had feedback and the opportunity to change the undesirable behaviour, the National ITT lead will agree that the placement is terminated. If the behaviour that the school has raised meets the threshold for consideration of misconduct or Fitness to Practise, the relevant process will then be followed as a next step. If the behaviour relates to an ongoing Support Process that has not been resolved to the final stage, the National ITT Lead will proceed with arrangements to look for an alternative placement school for the trainee. In the period where a new placement is being sought, the trainee will be 'paused' on the programme, which may require an extension to the training year to make up this time missed. It should be noted that every effort will be made to find other placement opportunities for the trainee and REAch Teach expects trainees to positively engage in this process. If it proves to be impossible to find an alternative placement the National ITT Lead will discuss with the trainee what exit awards might be available.

Where a placement ceases, it will be the trainee's responsibility to ensure that all pupil work, school property etc. is returned to the placement school as quickly as possible.