

SCITT

Disciplinary

Policy

Audience:	Trainees on REAch Teach Primary Partnership Initial Teacher Training courses
Ratified:	REAch2 Trust Board September 2026
Other related policies:	REAch Teach Admissions REAch Teach Progress & Assessment REAch Teach Fitness to Practise REAch2 Safeguarding
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.

REAch Teach Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

Contents

REAch Teach Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.....	3
1. Purpose	4
2. Guiding Principles	4
3. Scope and key definitions	5
Aggravating and Mitigating Factors.....	5
Safeguarding Concerns.....	5
Low-level Safeguarding Concerns	6
Alleged Criminal Activity	7
Companion/Supporter	7
Suspension	7
4. Informal Action	8
5. Formal Disciplinary Procedure	9
The Investigation Stage.....	9
Role of the Investigating Officer	9
Investigation Meetings	10
Investigation Outcomes	10
Formal Disciplinary Hearing.....	10
Duration of Warnings.....	12
A verbal warning will remain active for six months from the date of notification and will then be removed from the trainee's formal record, except where it relates to safeguarding concerns.	12
Persistent Concerns Following a Formal Warning	12
5. Appeals.....	12
Completion of Procedures Letter.....	13
Appendix 1: Definition and Examples of Misconduct.....	15
Appendix 2: Full Hearing Procedure	17

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that concerns relating to trainee conduct, professionalism, or behaviour are addressed promptly, fairly, consistently, and proportionately.

Trainees on the REAch Teach School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programme are entitled to a high-quality training experience in line with statutory programme requirements and guidelines. In return, REAch Teach requires trainees to uphold and embody the professional standards expected of a teacher, including high standards of personal and professional conduct, honesty, and integrity (as outlined in the Teachers' Standards, 2021) and a commitment to keeping children safe. The SCITT Trainee Contract (including the [Trainee Code of Conduct](#)), which is signed at commencement of the programme, clearly sets out REAch Teach's expectations regarding conduct and must be read in conjunction with this policy.

REAch Teach aims to address concerns at the earliest appropriate stage, ensuring trainees are treated fairly and supported throughout the process. Day-to-day supervision and feedback from mentors form part of the normal training programme and are guided by the REAch Teach Assessment Framework, including the Professional Behaviours strand.

Regular feedback is built into the programme, providing trainees with ongoing opportunities to learn, develop, and demonstrate progress in line with the REAch Teach Trainee Progress and Assessment Policy.

This policy applies to all trainees enrolled on the REAch Teach programme and to acts of misconduct committed outside the SCITT training programme if it is found there is some link to the SCITT programme and/or its reputation.

2. Guiding Principles

REAch Teach will:

- act promptly and proportionately;
- ensure trainees understand concerns raised;
- provide opportunities for trainees to respond;
- ensure investigations and decisions are undertaken by individuals with no direct prior involvement wherever possible;
- maintain confidentiality appropriately;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are prioritised at all times.

Timescales within this procedure are indicative and may be adjusted where necessary due to placement circumstances, safeguarding considerations, school availability and/or the complexity of the case.

3. Scope and key definitions

This policy does not normally apply to concerns primarily relating to trainee competence or capability. These should ordinarily be managed through either the REAch Teach Trainee Progress and Assessment policy (competence) or the Fitness to Practise policy (health and physical capacity to teach) (<https://reachteach.org/policies/>) depending on the concern.

Where concerns involving professional competence or fitness to practise also involve concerns regarding conduct, REAch Teach reserves the right to determine the most appropriate process.

For the purposes of this policy, 'misconduct' is defined as any breach of the REAch Teach Trainee Contract, including the Trainee Code of Conduct. These clearly set out the expectations of conduct for a trainee on the REAch Teach training programme. Specific actions that may be deemed as 'misconduct' are included, but not limited to the examples in Appendix 1.

Aggravating and Mitigating Factors

Aggravating factors that may **increase** the seriousness of a concern include:

- repeated concerns or patterns of behaviour;
- lack of insight or accountability;
- impact on pupils, schools, or colleagues;
- dishonesty;
- failure to engage with support or guidance;
- reputational risk to REAch Teach, REAch2 or partnership schools;
- safeguarding implications.

Mitigating factors that may **reduce** the severity of an outcome include:

- early acknowledgement of concerns;
- evidence of reflection and improvement;
- engagement with support;
- isolated nature of the incident;
- personal circumstances;

Safeguarding Concerns

Where the matter concerns a safeguarding issue, i.e. there is a concern regarding the conduct of a trainee in respect of a child, the National or Regional ITT Lead will ensure that the Local Authority

Designated Officer (LADO) and the REAch2 Safeguarding and People Teams are made aware. No action will be taken until the LADO has been contacted and offered advice.

LADO safeguarding and REAch Teach investigations may run at the same time or jointly, where possible and appropriate. Safeguarding actions must take priority until risks are satisfactorily managed.

Low-level Safeguarding Concerns

There are occasions where an incident occurs, which does not meet the safeguarding harm threshold but may be significant enough to warrant action. The [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) guidance describes such occasions as low-level concerns.

For the purposes of this policy, a low-level concern is defined as a concern relating to behaviour that is inconsistent with the REAch Teach Trainee Code of Conduct but which does not meet the threshold for an allegation of abuse or is not considered serious enough for a referral to the LADO, as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to the following:

- being over-friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- not maintaining professional boundaries;
- taking photographs of children on a mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
- using language or behaviour which is perceived by others to be sexualised, intimidating, or offensive.

The REAch2 Safeguarding Policy sets out the procedure for responding to reports of low-level concerns. To determine next steps, the National or Regional ITT Lead (or a deputising colleague) will collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

The information collected will help the National ITT Lead to categorise the type of behaviour and determine what further action may need to be taken. This will be recorded along with the rationale for the decisions and action taken.

Alleged Criminal Activity

A disciplinary investigation may run in parallel to a police audit and/or child protection investigation and should not be held up by any such investigations unless considered prejudicial to those investigations. It is not always necessary to await the outcome of any court hearing before deciding on disciplinary action.

Companion/Supporter

Trainees may request to be accompanied by a 'companion' (e.g. a friend or family member) at formal meetings under this policy. Due to potential conflicts of interest, this companion should not be a fellow trainee or staff member of REAch2 or a placement school. The role of the companion/supporter is to act as an observer and to give pastoral support to the trainee.

In addition, where reasonable adjustments are required, a trainee may be accompanied by another support individual to provide these adjustments, e.g. a sign language interpreter.

No one is obliged to act as a companion if they do not wish to do so. If the choice of companion is unsuitable, REAch Teach may ask for the trainee to choose someone else.

It is the responsibility of the trainee to arrange for their companion/ supporter to attend and to inform REAch Teach of their name and relationship to the trainee ahead of the meeting.

Suspension

Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction and carries no assumption of guilt but would be a reasoned action to allow a full and fair investigation to take place.

The National ITT Lead, with advice from colleagues in the People team and/or Safeguarding teams (in safeguarding-related cases), will assess the risks of the trainee remaining in active training (in placement or online training) as soon as an allegation has been made. The perspective of a placement school would be sought as part of this decision-making process. Based on this advice, the National ITT Lead will decide which interim measures should apply whilst the investigation is underway. Interim measures could include but are not limited to:

- suspension from school placement only
- suspension from online or face-to-face training
- suspension from all aspects of the REAch Teach SCITT programme;
- withdrawal of the trainee's access to IT systems
- restriction of contact between the trainee and named person/s

- restriction of access to REAch Teach's and/ or the placement school's premises.

Suspension may be considered when:

- working relationships have severely broken down;
- the placement school terminates the training placement;
- to avoid any repetition of the circumstances which led to an allegation;
- there is reasonable belief that a trainee could tamper with evidence, influence witnesses or otherwise sway an investigation into an allegation of misconduct;
- there is any potential risk to the trainee, pupils, staff, fellow trainees or property;
- the trainee is the subject of criminal proceedings which may affect whether they can complete an ITT programme and be awarded QTS.

In the event that a trainee is suspended from their placement, relevant regulatory authorities (e.g. Student Finance) will be informed of this decision as there may be an impact to a trainee's Student Finance entitlement and duration of training.

REAch Teach recognises that being suspended can be an anxious time for a trainee so the trainee will be provided with a named contact to direct any queries towards during their suspension.

Arrangements will be made to keep in touch with them, e.g. to keep them informed as to the progress of the investigation and to offer pastoral support. Trainees will also be able to continue to access support from counselling services and other services may be provide. This may include a referral to the Occupational Health service.

4. Informal Action

For 'minor misconduct' (see Appendix 1), REAch Teach aims to resolve concerns informally utilising the training programme's standard support model – giving feedback, support and a clear timeframe for the trainee to address the concern. This supports an early, fair, and proportionate resolution, encourages open communication and focuses on improvement in the spirit of a professional training programme.

Informal action is considered an integral part of the day-to-day operational running of the training programme. Trainees will be given regular opportunities to ask for additional support and/or share mitigations and context as part of the informal process.

Informal actions may include:

- professional discussions;
- use of the Trainee Support Process (e.g. Bespoke Support or Rapid Improvement Plan)
- a verbal reminder of expectations (shared in written form to support trainee understanding);

- a first or final written warning.

5. Formal Disciplinary Procedure

Where concerns are considered Severe or Persistent (see Appendix 1), REAch Teach will initiate a formal disciplinary procedure.

Where formal action is required, the REAch Teach National ITT Lead will appoint an Investigating Officer to investigate the allegation.

The Investigation Stage

The Investigating Officer will be a REAch2 employee who has had no substantive prior involvement in the management of the concern. The National ITT Lead has the right to appoint an external Investigating Officer if it is deemed appropriate due to the complexity, seriousness or nature of the concern.

The Investigating Officer will conduct an investigation into the alleged misconduct. The purpose of an investigation is to establish a fair and balanced view of the facts relating to any disciplinary allegations against a trainee. The extent of the investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case.

Within 5 working days of the decision to initiate a Formal Disciplinary Procedure, the trainee will normally be notified in writing:

- that a formal investigation is being commenced;
- the nature of the concerns being investigated;
- the name of the Investigating Officer;
- the next steps in the process.

Role of the Investigating Officer

The role of the Investigating Officer is to:

- establish the facts of the matter;
- gather relevant evidence;
- meet with relevant individuals where appropriate;
- provide the trainee with the opportunity to respond to concerns;
- prepare an investigation report presenting the investigation's findings and recommendation/s.

The Investigating Officer will maintain a record of all investigatory meetings and collate witness statements where appropriate. These may later be referred to in a Disciplinary Panel hearing.

Separate disciplinary action may be taken if any individual is found to have deliberately provided false information or discussed the issue outside of the investigation process.

Investigation Meetings

The Trainee will be invited in writing to an investigation meeting with the Investigating Officer. The written invitation to the trainee will normally include:

- the nature of the concerns being explored;
- the date, time, and location of the meeting;
- any documentation currently available;
- the option for the trainee to be accompanied by companion/supporter

A trainee is required to co-operate fully and promptly with the Investigating Officer to ensure that the investigation can be completed as swiftly and thoroughly as possible.

A trainee may provide a written response to the Investigating Officer instead if preferred.

Investigation Outcomes

Following completion of the investigation, the Investigating Officer will submit their findings and recommendations to the REAch Teach National ITT Lead in the form of a report for their due consideration.

If the investigation determines that a disciplinary hearing is required, a panel will be convened to decide the appropriate sanction from no further action up to and including termination of the trainee's training.

Formal Disciplinary Hearing

The disciplinary panel will normally consist of three REAch2 employees or SCITT Strategic Partnership Board Members, with no previous involvement with the case.

The trainee will be given 5 working days' written notice of the disciplinary hearing in order to prepare. They will receive a full copy of the investigation report and any supporting documentation.

Copies of documents that the trainee wishes to present and details of any witnesses they wish to call will need to be sent to the Chair of the Disciplinary Panel no later than 2 working days prior to the hearing.

The date of the hearing can be postponed for up to 5 school days if the trainee's chosen companion is not available. If a trainee fails to attend the re-arranged hearing and there is no reasonable justification for this, their case will be considered by the disciplinary panel in their absence.

The panel will consider all the evidence presented and the trainee will have an opportunity to present evidence in their defence and any evidence in mitigation.

The Chair of the Disciplinary Panel may adjourn the disciplinary meeting to allow further investigations in the light of the trainee's evidence and may reconvene the hearing, if appropriate, to give them an opportunity to comment on any further evidence produced by further investigations.

The panel may rely on written witness evidence and is not required to hear oral evidence. Where oral witness evidence is heard, the trainee will have an opportunity to comment on it during the hearing (see Appendix 3: Full Hearing Procedure). The panel's decision, including the reasons for any warning, the consequences of further misconduct, and the right of appeal, will be confirmed in writing within five working days of the hearing.

If this timeline is not possible, the trainee will be informed of this and the reasons why, and a new estimated timeline provided.

Overview of Possible Outcomes

Possible outcomes from the hearing may include:

- no further action;
- a formal written warning
- a final written warning
- mandatory conditions or support requirements;
- other programme changes (e.g. consideration of placement school or training arrangements)
- termination of the trainee's training

Where termination of training is the outcome, the panel will consider whether there are any ongoing concerns regarding the trainee's suitability to enter the teaching profession. Where such concerns are identified, the National ITT Lead will make referrals to relevant statutory bodies (e.g. DfE, DBS, Student Finance). The trainee will be notified of any referrals in their outcome letter.

Duration of Warnings

A verbal warning will remain active for six months from the date of notification and will then be removed from the trainee's formal record, except where it relates to safeguarding concerns.

A written warning will remain active for the remainder of the trainee's programme. This reflects the professional standards expected of trainee teachers and REAch Teach's responsibility to assess a trainee's suitability for recommendation for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) against all Teachers' Standards, including Part 2.

Persistent Concerns Following a Formal Warning

Where concerns persist, despite the issuing of a formal warning, REAch Teach will ask the original Investigating Officer, where available, to review any new information before deciding whether further disciplinary action is required. This supports continuity and proportionality.

An alternative Investigating Officer may be appointed where:

- a conflict of interest arises;
- the trainee has raised substantiated concerns about the previous Investigating Officer's conduct or
- the nature of the allegations has changed significantly.

5. Appeals

An appeal hearing is not a re-hearing of the case and it may only proceed on the following grounds:

- a) there is evidence of procedural irregularity, where the trainee can evidence that the REAch Teach has failed to adhere to its own stated policy and procedures.
- b) the trainee has new information to present which, had it been considered at the time, might have affected the panel's decision. It should be noted that if this information was available at the time of the investigation, but was not disclosed for any reason, it will not be considered as new information.
- c) there is evidence of bias or prejudice in the decision
- d) that the action the panel has decided to take is disproportionate or not permitted under the procedures.

Any appeal must be submitted in writing within five working days of the training receiving the outcome of the disciplinary hearing in writing. The appeal must clearly state the grounds for appeal, supported

by any relevant evidence. Appeals may be rejected if the grounds for appeal are not clearly stated and if the appeal is submitted outside the required timescale without a good reason. This decision will be made by a suitably senior person who has had no prior involvement in the case. Their role is limited to determining whether the appeal meets the required grounds and criteria; consideration of the merits of the appeal remains the responsibility of the Appeal Panel.

The appeal will be heard within 10 working days of the appeal being received in writing and the trainee will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the appeal hearing. The appeals panel will be formed of an appropriate combination of REAch Teach team member/s more senior than the National ITT Lead SCITT governors, or senior managers within REAch2 depending on who had original involvement with the case; no member of the original disciplinary hearing panel shall be a member of the appeal panel.

An appeal hearing will result in one of the following outcomes:

- The appeal is upheld and any sanction imposed by the original disciplinary hearing panel is withdrawn
- The appeal is not upheld but a lesser sanction is considered
- The appeal is not upheld and the original sanction remains in place

Where an appeal against a decision to terminate training is upheld, the trainee will be reinstated to the programme as soon as a suitable placement becomes available. REAch Teach will make all reasonable endeavours to secure this as soon as possible, in line with the REAch Teach Deferrals, Extensions, Transfers and Withdrawals policy (<https://reachteach.org/policies/>).

Time spent away from training due to disciplinary or appeal proceedings may require an extension to the trainee's programme to allow sufficient evidence to be gathered for final assessment and recommendation for QTS. REAch Teach will work with the trainee to minimise any extension, in line with the Department for Education's requirements.

The decision of the panel will be confirmed within five school days following the hearing. If this is not possible and the panel require more time to consider their decision, this will be communicated to the trainee.

The appeal hearing is the final stage and there is no further right of appeal following a decision

Completion of Procedures Letter

If a trainee's appeal is not upheld or is not permitted to proceed, a Completion of Procedures Letter will be sent to the trainee.

The letter will inform the trainee about:

- their right to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for review;
- that the time limit for doing so is 12 months from the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.
- where and how to access advice and support, especially where the panel has set conditions that the trainee must meet before they can continue with their training.

The letter acts as a final decision statement and is formally required if a trainee wishes to complain to the OIA.

Appendix 1: Definition and Examples of Misconduct

'Misconduct' refers to behaviour or actions that fall below the professional standards expected of a trainee teacher outlined in the REAch Teach Trainee Contract (and Code of Conduct).

'Minor' Misconduct (major breaches may constitute Severe Misconduct)

Examples may include (but are not limited to):

- breaches of health and safety rules engaging in activities or conduct that places an individual at risk, including breaches of confidentiality
- lateness or poor timekeeping not in line with Trainee Code of Conduct expectations;
- poor quality or inappropriate professional communication;
- inappropriate or excessive personal use of school property and/or equipment
- failure to report damage to school property and/or equipment as soon as possible;
- failure to follow reasonable requests/instructions
- unauthorised absence from training
- inappropriate conduct towards other trainees, school employees, parents, or any other stakeholder
- wilfully aiding or encouraging other trainees or employees to breach rules or procedures or to perform other acts of misconduct;
- repeated failure to complete required tasks, or engage appropriately with Trainee Support Process expectations;
- inappropriate use of mobile phones, social media or Artificial Intelligence tools;
- unprofessional conduct within any aspect of training (placement or training sessions);
- any other acts that fall below the professional standards expected of a trainee, or the conduct outlined in the Trainee Contract (including the Trainee Code of Conduct)

'Persistent misconduct' refers to persistent minor misconduct (see above) after informal action has been put in place.

'Severe misconduct' refers to behaviour so serious that it fundamentally undermines trust and confidence in the trainee to uphold and embody the professional standards expected of a teacher. This includes, but is not limited to:

- aggressive, abusive or indecent behaviour including instances of discrimination, harassment, or bullying;
- safeguarding breaches;
- dishonesty or fraud, including falsification of school or training documents

- failure to disclose convictions or other information that the trainee is required to disclose at onboarding or during the programme;
- theft or attempted theft
- being under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances in a professional setting;
- dangerous practice or infringement of safety rules, which may or may not result in injury or endanger health and safety;
- serious cases of neglect of duty;
- wilful damage to property;
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information (unless it is in public interest, please refer to the REAch2 Whistleblowing Policy – <https://www.reach2.org/policies/>);
- some cases of refusal to carry out reasonable requests
- other serious misconduct which contravenes the Trainee Code of Conduct or the policies of the school or any action of sufficient gravity that is likely to bring REAch Teach, REAch2, placement schools, or the profession into serious disrepute.

Appendix 2: Full Hearing Procedure

Introduction to the meeting

The Chair of the panel will:

- open the hearing and ask all parties to introduce themselves by name and in what capacity they are attending the hearing
- explain the purpose of the hearing and read out the allegation/s to be considered
- confirm that summary notes of the meeting will be taken (they will not be verbatim)
- request all mobiles/electronic devices are turned off
- outline the format of hearing (please see point 2: order of events, timeframe)
- explain that the outcome will be confirmed to the trainee in writing
- check to see if any party has any questions.

2. Format of the hearing (appeals are in reverse of below stated):

- Panel review the investigation report (management case)
- Trainee asks the Investigating Officer questions
- Panel asks the Investigating Officer questions;
- Investigating Officer calls any witnesses (if appropriate) and asks them questions
- Trainee asks the witness/es questions
- Panel ask the witness/es questions
- Witness/es leaves the hearing
- Trainee presents their case
- Investigating officer asks trainee questions
- Panel asks trainee questions
- Trainee calls witnesses (if appropriate) and asks them questions
- Investigating Officer asks the witness/es questions
- Panel asks the witness/es questions,
- Witness/es leave the hearing
- All parties leave with the exception of People Adviser and panel
- Panel deliberate to make the decision