

Embrace
S C I T T


Fitness to Train Policy

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Person(s) Responsible for Review:	Head of SCITT & Operational Leadership Group
Approved by:	Strategic Leadership Group
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Signed on behalf of the Strategic Leadership Group:	

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1. Purpose

- 1.1.** The purpose of this policy is to provide clear procedures for dealing with concerns raised by Embrace SCITT or its partner schools about a trainee's fitness to train. Trainee is a term used to refer to provider-led trainee and teacher apprentice. Nothing in this policy is intended to form the basis of a contract between the SCITT and Trainee. The SCITT may amend this policy at any time without prior notice.

2. Definitions & Examples

- 2.1.** For the purposes of this policy, 'fitness to train' is defined as: 'trainees have the health and physical capacity to train to teach and will not put children and young people at risk of harm.'
- 2.2.** Examples where this policy may be required to be implemented are:
- Failure to make sufficient progress towards the end of phase expectations and National Teacher Standards Part 1.
 - Any action which is deemed to be in direct contravention of Part 2 of the National Teacher Standards – Personal and Professional Conduct, such as:

<i>Trainee persistent absence or poor punctuality.</i>	<i>Inappropriate use of social media</i>	<i>Concerns relating to disability, health and wellbeing</i>
<i>Breach of confidentiality</i>	<i>Dishonesty or fraud</i>	<i>Health and wellbeing</i>
<i>Criminal conviction or caution (including failure to disclose any new cautions or convictions)</i>	<i>Damage to Sea View Trust, Embrace SCITT or a Partner School's property</i>	<i>Withdrawal of a placement offer or self-withdrawal from a school-based placement</i>
<i>Safeguarding concerns</i>	<i>Financial misconduct</i>	<i>Drug, alcohol or substance misuse</i>
<i>Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour</i>	<i>Persistent inappropriate behaviour or attitude</i>	<i>Not having the necessary knowledge of English</i>
<i>Failure to comply with the programme requirements, including record updates and inadequate progress towards the end of phase expectations.</i>	<i>Failure to disclose any changes to disability, health and wellbeing during the programme</i>	

- 2.3.** Please note that the above is not an exhaustive list and the SCITT fully reserves its right to identify other conduct which may be subject to the terms of the policy.

3. General Principles

- 3.1.** Embrace SCITT aims to provide an inclusive training programme for the Trainees it serves.
- 3.2.** Embrace SCITT and its partner schools recognise that Trainees are still learning about the professional standards and conduct required in the teaching profession.
- 3.3.** Embrace SCITT will seek to discuss concerns informally with a Trainee unless the issue giving rise to the Fitness to Practise concern is sufficiently serious.
- 3.4.** Embrace SCITT expects all parties to act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the processes themselves with respect.
- 3.5.** Embrace SCITT will work to ensure this policy is used fairly, proportionally and in a timely way.
- 3.6.** Embrace SCITT will ensure that decisions are taken by people without actual or perceived conflicts of interest and that all involved will ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality through the process, without causing disadvantage.

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- 3.7. Trainees will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a peer or representative from a Teaching Union or Students' Union.
- 3.8. Embrace SCITT will put all the outcomes of any investigation in writing for the Trainee. A Completion of Procedures (COP) letter will be used at 'end points' in the process.

4. Concerns related to Part 2 of the National Teacher Standards – Personal & Professional Conduct.


- 4.1. Where concerns are raised with a Trainee's behaviour which could be considered to be in contravention of Part 2 of the National Teacher Standards – Personal and Professional Conduct, the Programme Leader and Head of SCITT will consider whether further investigation is required.
- 4.2. If further investigation is required an Investigating Officer will be appointed – this person will be independent of the raised concerns. There are five possible outcomes:
 - i. The investigation identifies that there has been no breach of Part 2 of the National Teacher Standards and the concern is dismissed.
 - ii. The investigation highlights that a breach has occurred. The concern is discussed with the Trainee who receives advice and guidance as to how to ensure this does not happen again.
 - iii. A specified outcome is given; this may include: a verbal warning, permission to continue on the programme under close supervision, a TRIP, referral to Occupational Health Services, self-referral to GP.
 - iv. The investigation highlights an ongoing or serious breach of Part 2 of the National Teacher Standards and the case is referred to a Fitness to Train Review Board.
 - v. The Programme Leader / Head of SCITT seeks further investigation and alerts the Accounting Officer.

5. Trainee Recovery & Improvement Plans (TRIPs) - Stages of Support - *Informal*

- 5.1. Occasionally, Mentors and Trainees may raise concerns with the progress Trainees are making towards end of phase expectations and, ultimately, the National Teacher Standards to be awarded QTS.
- 5.2. Where this occurs, Embrace SCITT utilises a support framework designed to lift Trainees and get them 'back on track' quickly. A Trainee Recovery & Improvement Plan (TRIP) (Appendix A) is co-produced to diagnose the difficulties and initiate robust, rapid and targeted support to help Trainees be the best they can be.
- 5.3. Embrace SCITT has identified three stages of support with appropriate timescales and support provided.

	Stage	Timescale	Response to	Initiated & reviewed by
i.	Emergent	1-2 weeks	Inconsistent demonstration in 1 curriculum area	School-Based Mentor & Lead Mentor
ii.	Serious	2-3 weeks	Inconsistent demonstration in 2-3 curriculum areas and/or inappropriate progress at Emergent Support. Specific concerns related to Part 2 of the National Teacher Standards – Personal and Professional Conduct.	Lead Mentor & Programme Leader
iii.	Intensive	3 weeks	Inconsistent demonstration in all 4 areas of the curriculum and/or inappropriate progress at Serious Support. Continued and/or further concerns related to Part 2 of the National Teacher Standards – Personal and Professional Conduct.	Programme Leader & Head of SCITT

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- 5.4. If a Trainee is successful and the TRIP is no longer needed, they will be informed.
- 5.5. If a Trainee is successful and then further concerns are raised related to the same difficulties, another TRIP will be initiated at the next level in order to provide the necessary support for the improvement to be sustainable.
- 5.6. At each stage, the Trainee will be informed verbally and will form part of the co-production of the TRIP.

6. Suspension from Training

- 6.1. Embrace SCITT and its Partners reserve the right to suspend a Trainee from their training if an allegation is deemed to pose a potential risk to members of the SCITT, its Partner Schools or Pupils.

7. Fitness to Train Review Board - *Formal*

- 7.1. In the event of inadequate progress towards the requirements of the Initial Teacher Training programme expectations and SMART targets from the TRIP or a breach of the Trainee Code of Conduct or Part 2 of the National Teacher Standards, it *may* be appropriate to convene a Fitness to Train Review Board.
- 7.2. The Trainee will be informed verbally and in writing within 5 working days of the final review of the TRIP.
- 7.3. The Review Board meeting will be held within 20 school days of notification of the meeting.
- 7.4. The Trainee will be invited to attend with a peer or Teaching or Student's Union representative. The invitation will include key information, including; the name of the Investigating Officer (responsible for collating information relevant for the Review Board's consideration), date (which will be no less than 10 days from the date of the invitation), time & venue of the meeting; the composition of the panel; the deadline by which the Trainee can submit any additional information pertaining to the case (after which the additional information will not be taken into account).
- 7.5. The Review Board will:
 - i. Be held in the Trainee's absence unless they are able to provide sufficient medical evidence to explain why they are not able to attend.
 - ii. Be made up of at least three people from the Embrace SCITT team, including representation from the Strategic Leadership Group, the Head of SCITT, Programme Leaders and Lead Mentors.
 - iii. For concerns related to Part 2 of the National Teacher Standards – Personal and Professional Conduct and the Trainee Code of Conduct, the Fitness to Train Review Board will be composed of 3 members of the Strategic Leadership Group.
- 7.6. The Review Board will consider:
 - i. The evidence provided by the Investigating Officer. This will be supplemented by a verbal summary on the day.
 - ii. The Trainee's progress towards the programme expectations and National Teacher Standards.
 - iii. The support provided to ensure that Trainee is given the necessary strategic direction to make progress.
 - iv. The actions the Trainee has taken to make progress towards the SMART targets, programme expectations and National Teacher Standards.
 - v. Any further evidence provided by the Trainee beforehand or during discussions.
- 7.7. The Review Board will be minuted and these will be provided to the Trainee within 10 school days following the meeting. This communication will inform the Trainee of the outcome of the Review Board.
- 7.8. Potential outcomes of the Review Board are:
 - i. The Trainee is no longer fit to train to teach.

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- *The Trainee may be suspended from training until such a time as undertakings, recommendations or conditions by the Review Board have been met.*
- *The Trainee may be dismissed from the Embrace SCITT programme.*
- ii. The concern is dismissed. The Review Board will inform the Trainee of a remedy and whether an apology is required.
- iii. Permission to continue on the programme with a formal written warning on file and a requirement for further training.
- iv. The Review Board will write to the Trainee informing them of their decision.

8. Appeals

- 8.1. The Trainee has the right to appeal against the decision of the Fitness to Train Review Board.
- 8.2. If the Trainee wishes to appeal they should inform the Head of SCITT in writing, outlining the reasons for the appeal within 10 working days of the outcome having been given to the Trainee.
- 8.3. If the Trainee is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal stage, they can appeal via a review.
- 8.4. A review will consider:
 - i. a review of the procedures followed at the formal stage.
 - ii. a consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable.
 - iii. any new material evidence that the Trainee was unable, for valid reasons, to provide at Stage 2.
- 8.5. The review will not:
 - i. re-hear the complaint afresh
 - ii. involve a further investigation
- 8.6. An appeal must have been considered at the formal stage (Stage 2) before it can be escalated to the review stage.
- 8.7. If an appeal reaches this stage, a Review Panel drawn from the Embrace SCITT Strategic Leadership Group will consider the way in which the complaint was investigated in Stage 2. The Trainee will be invited in writing to attend a hearing and given 10 school days' notice of the hearing date.
 - i. Trainees will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a peer or representative from a Teaching Union or Students' Union (legal representation will not be permitted).
 - ii. The Trainee will be provided with information about the composition of the panel, a summary of the evidence to be considered and information about the support that is available to them including contact details.
 - iii. The panel will consist of three members of the Strategic Leadership Group. They will consider the evidence.
 - iv. A record of the meeting will be taken recording the date, people in attendance and a brief summary of the meeting.
- 8.8. The Panel will consider the following questions:
 - i. Were the relevant procedures followed during the formal stage?
 - ii. Was the outcome reasonable in all the circumstances?
 - iii. Has the Trainee received clear reasons why the outcome from previous stages has been determined.
 - iv. If new material evidence has been provided, has the Trainee given valid reasons for not supplying this earlier?
 - v. If new material evidence is submitted, would this have altered the determination at Stage 2?
- 8.9. The Appeals Panel, having considered the material submitted to them may:
 - i. Overturn the outcome of the formal stage and recommend a remedy.

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- ii. Refer the appeal back to the formal stage for reconsideration.
 - iii. Uphold the outcome of the formal stage.
- 8.10.** The Chair of the Review Panel will write to the Trainee with their decision and an outline of the reasons for their decision within five working days of the hearing. Where appropriate, this letter will also advise the Trainee on their right to appeal to the OIA, the time limit for doing so and where and how to access advice and support with this process.

9. Office of the Independent Adjudicator

- 9.1.** Once the review stage is completed, the Trainee is entitled to ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), the independent ombudsman service, to review their appeal about the outcome of the Embrace SCITT Fitness to Train process. The appeal should be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter from the Chair of the Review Panel.

10. Data Protection

- 10.1.** Embrace SCITT will retain data related to the investigation for 7 years from the start of the investigation and after this time all data will be deleted. All data will be stored securely during this time.
- 10.2.** All investigations will be treated confidentially. Embrace SCITT will only disclose information to those who need it to investigate or to respond to the issues raised.
- 10.3.** When a Trainee responds to an investigation they should only include any necessary information about third parties. Evidence provided must focus on the impact that a third party has had on the Trainee themselves and kept to that which is necessary for the submission being made. For example, if the investigation is based on the health of a family member, Embrace SCITT does not need to see the detailed medical information about that person.