

# The Keele and North Staffordshire Teacher Education SCITT

## Disciplinary Policy for Associate Teachers

**Approved by:** KNSTE Strategic Board  
**Review Interval:** 3 Years  
**Last Review date:** April 2024  
**Next Review Date:** April 2027  
**Audience:** Trainees and Lead Mentors

## Introduction

This Keele and North Staffordshire SCITT disciplinary policy applies to Trainees. Disciplinary and Grievance matters relating to KNSTE staff are covered in a separate policy.

All Trainees are expected to conduct themselves with due regard to their legal responsibilities as adults and guests in their placement schools, including whilst at the Kidsgrove Secondary School (KSS) site. Their behaviour at all times is expected to be consistent with the KNSTE Professional Code of Conduct which is signed at the commencement of the programme. This includes reference to Part Two of the Teachers' Standards.

In addition, as enrolled students of Keele University, all Trainees are also subject to Keele University's Student Discipline expectations and regulations. All students of the University are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is responsible and respectful to others, whether they be other students, members of staff, visitors to the University or members of the local community. Such expectations are set out in the Student Agreement.

When Trainees enrol they agree to abide by the University's regulations. This includes [Regulation B.1 Student Discipline](#). Regulation B.1 sets out the details of the types of behaviour that the University will not tolerate. The University treats disciplinary offences very seriously and penalties will be given for proven cases, including termination of studies from the University programme for very serious or repeat offences. It is therefore very important that they are aware of Regulation B.1 and its expectations. Further information and details of penalties can be found at: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/appeals-complaints-conduct/studentdiscipline/>

The other key regulation ATs need to be aware of is the University's Academic Misconduct regulation [D.4](#) and the associated Academic Misconduct Code of Practice. Any suspected case of academic misconduct relating to a Keele module will be dealt with under Keele's process for academic misconduct.

KNSTE's policy has been informed by OIA's Good Practice Framework for Disciplinary Procedures which can be found at: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/resources-and-publications/good-practice-framework/disciplinary-procedures/>

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe in line with the Equality Act 2010. It does not have an adverse effect on race, gender or disability equality.

## Scope of this Policy

Complaints against Trainees may be raised by KNSTE, Keele-based or school-based staff, other Trainees or wider members of the KNSTE community. Examples of complaints that may result in the need to implement disciplinary procedures include:

- A) School-based and Professional Behaviour (KNSTE policy applies)
- Irregular attendance
  - Persistent lateness
  - Failure to complete assignments / professional tasks / course activities
  - Inability to meet deadlines
  - Misappropriation of KNSTE and / or its partner schools' funds, assets or resources

- Placing themselves, pupils or colleagues at risk by not conforming to health and safety procedures
  - Unprofessional behaviour in terms of conduct, language or dress
  - Preventing or obstructing or disrupting the teaching and learning within partnership schools or in the KNSTE sessions
  - Deliberately or recklessly misusing or damaging any resources or property belonging to KNSTE, colleagues or partner schools.
- B) Student Discipline (see Keele Regulation B.1 – KNSTE or Keele may initiate case and share information in relation to these alleged offences in order to risk assess and decide whether to investigate. Both will complete their own procedures)
- Inappropriate use of Social Media
  - Withholding evidence of past or present criminal convictions or cautions
  - Violence, child abuse, alcohol or drug abuse, criminal activities, racial or sexual harassment, whether in or out of school
  - Acts of extremism, radicalisation or not upholding fundamental British Values
- C) Academic Misconduct (see Keele Regulation D.4)
- Unfair practice such as plagiarism, cheating or collusion with regard to academic assignments

The above list represents examples and is not exhaustive. Each case will be dealt with individually and on its own merits.

If any of the above occur within a placement school, then the Head-teacher has the authority to suspend the Trainee from the placement immediately and contact the KNSTE Director to commence an immediate investigation.

## Procedures

A complaint can be made via email or orally to the KNSTE Director. This should be supported by evidence and / or witnesses. Alternatively, a complaint or report may be submitted to Keele University

### Process for Alleged Offences covered in section A) and some section B)<sup>1</sup> above

In the event of a complaint regarding an Trainee being received on a matter covered by section A) above, the KNSTE Director will inform the Chair of the Strategic Board to seek the formation of a Disciplinary Committee. The Disciplinary Committee will consist of a KNSTE administrator together with two representatives from the Strategic Board, not associated with either of the Trainee's placement schools or a school associated directly with the complaint. The Chair will not be the KNSTE's administrator. This committee will meet within five working days of the complaint being received.

The Trainee will be informed in writing of the nature of the concern and the date and the time of the Disciplinary Committee meeting and be asked to submit a written account of events from their perspective.

---

<sup>1</sup> This process will be followed for offences under section B) above where the discipline offence took place on KNSTE-associated premises or involved school-based activity or pupils

The Disciplinary Committee will consider the written complaint and the Trainee account to establish whether or not there is the need for an investigation which will normally be carried out by the KNSTE. Where the matter is serious, Keele University may decide to also refer the case to its Risk Assessment Panel to determine whether or not to impose any temporary restrictions. Such decisions will be made in discussion with representatives from the programme and the KNSTE.

If the matter is not found not to be worthy of further investigation, it shall be dismissed and no record of the case will be retained.

If the matter is established, then the disciplinary procedure will be invoked.

The Trainee will be informed in writing of the nature of the investigation and the date of a disciplinary meeting. Normally ten days' notice will be given of the meeting. The Trainee will be provided with copies of the documents that the committee is considering.

At the meeting the Trainee will be formally informed of the details of the matter and be invited to state their case.

The Trainee will be encouraged to be accompanied by an adviser or colleague of their choice.

The Trainee may be able to request an adjournment giving appropriate reasons.

The Trainee will be able to call a reasonable number of witnesses in support of their case at an appropriate time during the meeting.

After the meeting the Disciplinary Committee will consider all the evidence and notify the Trainee of the outcome within two working days.

Confidential minutes of the Disciplinary Committee will be kept on record.

The outcome may be:

- A formal verbal warning concerning future conduct, to be noted in the Trainee's file
- A formal written warning to be noted on the Trainee's file and shared with their personal tutor and placement schools.
- A final written warning
- Refer the matter to an extra-ordinary meeting of the Strategic Board for consideration of suspension or removal from the course. At this point the Trainee will be invited to submit a statement of mitigation for consideration by the board.

Any written warnings will remain on the Trainee's file for the duration of the course.

The Trainee may appeal against the Disciplinary Committee's decision using the KNSTE Appeals Policy and Procedure. Such an appeal must be made within 14 days of the decision of the Disciplinary Committee being received by the Trainee. The outcome of the appeal may be that;

- The Appeal has been upheld and recommendations for appropriate action by the KNSTE will be made
- A verbal warning would be appropriate
- A written warning would be appropriate
- Suspension or removal of the Trainee from the course would be appropriate.

The Trainee will be informed in writing of the reasons for the decision without delay.

## Information Sharing

On any matter which may be considered by Keele University to be covered by either Regulation B.1 Student Discipline or Regulation D.4 Academic Misconduct, the University will expect to be kept informed from an early stage and throughout the process, and involved in the decision making as appropriate. The University will then decide whether or not to invoke its own procedures as well as or instead of the KNSTE procedures. The University will also keep the KNSTE informed of any alleged or proven offences of an Trainee enrolled on the Keele programme. KNSTE will also continue to inform the University of any ongoing procedures as appropriate.

## Leadership and Management

The Disciplinary Committee is responsible for

- Implementing the Trainee disciplinary procedure
- Receiving evidence and making recommendations
- Keeping a written record of the matter

The KNSTE Director is responsible for

- Ensuring that Trainees are aware of the procedures
- Ensuring that all KNSTE staff are aware of the policy and procedures
- Presenting evidence as required by the Disciplinary Committee
- Implementing any recommendations

The KNSTE administrator is responsible for

- Supporting the disciplinary procedure
- Ensuring compliance with the OIA requirements and expectations
- Ensuring that the lines of communication between KNSTE and the University are consistent with those determined by this policy

## Monitoring and Review

The Strategic Board will monitor the implementation of the policy by

- Ensuring Trainee awareness of the policy
- Ensuring that the criteria are clear and applied consistently

The KNSTE Strategic Board will review the policy annually to ensure compliance with current guidance / legislation.