

Policy: Professionalism during the PGCE Programme

From: Southampton Education School

Date: 29.8.24

The PGCE programme is extremely busy and intense. For many Trainee Teachers it is the most challenging activity that they have ever attempted. It is easy therefore to be overwhelmed and to become anxious about what is expected of you. Ultimately what you need to consider is whether you are acting in a **professional manner**. Some of you will already have experienced situations where you had to demonstrate professionalism.

During school/college-based training, your professional conduct and relationships with staff, other Trainee Teachers and children/students are extremely important and will be monitored carefully, especially by your Mentors, colleagues in school/college and Tutors. Confidentiality is of the essence. You are reminded that discussion of professional matters, and in particular comments about pupils and colleagues in schools/colleges, can have serious consequences, and you are advised to avoid broadcasting your views or experiences via social networking sites or conversations in public spaces. You are strongly advised to implement the highest privacy settings on any social networking sites that you belong to, and to consider your conduct carefully at all times, in line with the 'Personal and Professional Conduct' expected of all Teachers in the [Teachers' Standards](#).

We encourage you to bring in internet enabled devices such as smartphones, tablets and laptops to some sessions and many people will use these regularly for various valuable purposes including taking notes, researching elements of the session and looking at the relevant PowerPoint slides from Blackboard. Using them for purposes other than those directly relevant to the session is considered unprofessional as it distracts others. As in meetings, mobile phones should not be used for texting or taking calls, except in extreme emergency, and only if this is cleared with the tutor or person leading the session in advance.

Please refer to Part 2 of the [Teachers' Standards](#) for guidance on **Personal and Professional conduct**

Working with Trainee Teacher colleagues

Being professional means:

- Being open to learning from the effective practice of colleagues;
- Listening carefully to advice and committing yourself to acting upon it;
- Respecting the rights of other people to equal opportunities and to confidentiality,
- Being committed to sharing own expertise – by attending school/college and subject meetings and taking an active part.

Working with Tutors, Mentors and other professionals

Being professional means:

- Respecting the skills, expertise and contributions of tutors, mentors and other professionals who work on the course;
- Being concerned to build productive working relationships with them;
- Recognising professionalism involves using judgement on appropriate standards of personal behaviour.

Working with Children

Being professional means:

- Demonstrating and promoting positive values, attitudes and behaviour;
- Having high expectations of all pupils and treating them with respect and consideration;
- Contributing to, and sharing responsibly in, the corporate life of schools/colleges.

Taking a lead in one's own learning and development

Being professional means:

- Making best use of opportunities available during the course;
- Continually reflecting on own practice, seeking to improve skills and deepen knowledge;
- Being open to adapting teaching to take account of new findings, ideas and technologies.

Professionalism in Practice

Some expectations of professionalism:

- Arriving early for university sessions, turning off your mobile phone and generally waiting until breaks in order to eat (or drink anything other than water);
- Trainee Teachers should ensure that they arrive in school or college in good time to prepare for the day ahead and spend time at the end of the day preparing for the teaching for the following day;
- Being polite, honest, fair and patient in all your interactions with all people on or involved in the programme;
- Understanding your responsibilities on the programme about reporting absences, meeting deadlines, and so on;
- Knowing (and demonstrating) appropriate conduct in university sessions and when in schools or college, including knowing and following dress codes and standards of personal presentation;
- Planning all lessons and getting these checked;
- Evaluating your performance, reflecting and striving for improvement;
- Understanding, and abiding by, issues of confidentiality;
- Understanding (and taking account of the fact) that Tutors, Mentors and other professionals involved in the programme (or with whom you have contact during the course) are busy people with other responsibilities;
- Maintaining regular and accessible contact with your Mentors and Tutors;
- Involve yourself in the wider life of the school/college; attending all staff and planning meetings unless asked not to, and attending parents' meetings where appropriate;

- Trainee Teachers are encouraged to take opportunities to work with pupils in as many different contexts as possible, such as extra-curricular activities;

Please also note that as part of our professional contract with you, we would not normally have contact with family members of students on the programme, regardless of the emotional or financial support they may offer.

Fitness to Practise

A programme of study which requires a student to undertake practical training in a quasi- professional role in relation to patients, clients, service users or the general public or where the qualification provides a direct licence to practise will be governed by a requirement that the student demonstrates their fitness to practise. In addition to existing University procedures for academic progression and conduct, the University must ensure that the health status of students and their professional behaviour does not constitute a risk to service users, clients and their families, carers, the public, other students or the individuals themselves.

There are mechanisms in place to monitor any issues during your studies. Please ensure you are aware of the [Fitness to Practise Policy](#).

The programme of study depends upon the satisfactory completion of theory and practice assessment and coursework, together with the demonstration of standards of behaviour, health and professional conduct relevant to future employment in the profession. As such, the programme of study is governed by a requirement that Trainee Teachers demonstrate their fitness to practise.

Behaviour, health and/or professional conduct that adversely affect a Trainee Teacher's Fitness to Practise may result in the Regulatory Body (currently the DfE) refusing to recognise the Trainee Teacher's award and entitlement to practise.

A Trainee Teacher's Fitness to Practise may be challenged when his/her behaviour, health and/or professional conduct gives cause for concern. The University reserves the right to implement its disciplinary procedures simultaneously.

Termination procedures will be instigated only when behaviour and/or performance is considered to be unprofessional, damaging or dangerous to pupils, other Trainee Teachers or school/college staff, or is considered to be unethical or creates unacceptable risk for themselves or others or as described above.

This procedure may be invoked at any time during the programme when behaviour and/or performance has been called into question, including either during a placement or after the placement has been completed, or at any time during the academic part of the programme. Persistent cause for concern or withdrawal of the placement may prompt termination procedures.

The entire process will be fully documented. This should be read in conjunction with the Programme Specification and the University Calendar of Regulations and the [Fitness to Practise Policy](#). Further details of the relevant processes are given in Part 2.