

# Removal of trainees from school placements

## **1 Professional behaviour and responsibilities of trainees**

### ***1.1 General expectations***

As students of NELTA, the professional behaviour and responsibilities of trainees are governed, primarily, by the (Employee) Code of Conduct to be found in the policies section of the Beal High School website.

### ***1.2 ITT programme expectations***

In addition, the ITT programme is underpinned by a set of clear expectations about the professional behaviour and responsibilities of trainees. These are embodied in the trainee agreement that all trainees sign.

These expectations cover a range of personal qualities and attributes expected of professional people working together and relate to consideration for others, courtesy, conscientiousness, confidentiality, patience, punctuality, mutual tolerance and respect, and a professional appearance and bearing.

The agreement states clearly that trainees 'are expected to establish and maintain appropriate professional relationships with NELTA tutors, teachers, trainee teachers, pupils, and other persons' that they are in contact with during the course. Failure in this area may result in your school placement being suspended. In these circumstances, NELTA cannot guarantee to find you an alternative placement and the Board of Examiners may decide that you have failed the programme of Initial Teacher Training

## **2 Initial Concerns about Professional Relationships**

### ***2.1 Concerns raised by NELTA***

The Support Plan and Cause for Concern Procedures outlines the appropriate procedures for dealing with this situation:

### ***2.2 Concerns raised by the School***

The Support Plan and Cause for Concern Procedures outlines the appropriate procedures for dealing with this situation:

Where initial concerns about a trainee's professional relationships have emerged through the School, the School Subject Mentor or, if appropriate, the School Professional Co-ordinating Mentor (PCM) should contact the NELTA Tutor or Principal/Director with details of the concern(s). At this stage, the trainee's attention should be drawn to these concerns, the Support Plan and Cause for Concern Procedures should be implemented.

### **3 Removal of placement by school related to Professional Relationships**

The clear expectations for professional behaviour and responsibility form the backbone of our programme. Where there is evidence that these expectations are not being met, the following process should be initiated:

- a) if colleagues at the placement school and/or the NELTA Tutor feel that a trainee is failing to meet the expectations identified in Section 1 above contact should be made through the procedures for initial concerns about professional relationships (see section 2 above)
- b) if the problems persist, or if the issues are sufficiently serious, the Professional Co-ordinating Mentor in the school and/or the NELTA Tutor should contact the NELTA Principal/Director NELTA Principal/Director and indicate a desire on the part of the School that the placement be terminated. At this stage, the School will be asked to provide the NELTA Principal/Director NELTA Principal with the detailed evidence which has led colleagues at the School to have a serious concern 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), records meetings between school colleagues and the trainee, and indicates action points which have been set up so as to enable the trainee to deal with the identified problems. Evidence from appropriate sections of the Professional Development File or tutor visits will also likely to be relevant, as will evidence from the trainee's NELTA Tutor. If the issues emerge towards the end of either placement 1 or placement 2, additional evidence is likely to include the relevant Professional Practice Reports since these Reports require schools to comment on the Professional Standards related to Qualified Teaching Status (QTS). In the circumstances outlined above, it is very likely that the reports will indicate a 'failing' profile from the School. Given that Partnership Schools offer placements to the NELTA Programme, the NELTA Principal/Director NELTA Principal/Director will agree to the School's request that the placement be terminated;
- c) as a result of this contact, the NELTA Principal/Director NELTA Principal/Director will arrange to meet with the trainee to discuss the situation. Given the serious nature of the School concerns, the NELTA Principal/Director NELTA Principal/Director will tell the trainee that their presence at the School should cease immediately. It will be the trainee's responsibility to ensure that all pupil work, school property etc. is returned to the School as quickly as possible, so that pupil progress is not hampered;
- d) at the meeting with the trainee, the NELTA Principal/Director will present the trainee with the details of the serious professional relationship concerns that have been identified and inform the trainee that the School has asked that the placement be terminated. Where possible, the NELTA tutor will be invited to attend this meeting. The trainee will be given the opportunity in advance of this meeting of presenting evidence to the NELTA Principal/Director in support of their position. The trainee will also be given the opportunity at this meeting of presenting and talking to the evidence which they wish to put forward in support of their position;
- e) if the evidence from the School includes a 'failing' profile in either Professional Practice Report 1 or Professional Practice Report 2 the situation will then move to the procedures relating to the failure of the trainee in the Cause for Concern procedures.
- f) if the evidence from the School does not indicate a Professional Practice Report 'failing' profile, the NELTA Principal/Director will then look at the evidence from both the School and the trainee and decide whether the School's decision to terminate the placement is justified. If the decision of the NELTA Principal/Director is in favour of the trainee, the NELTA Principal/Director will still need to inform the trainee that, given the nature of the Partnership arrangement with schools and the evident breakdown in relationship between the trainee and colleagues in the School, a return to the original School will not be possible. In this situation, a procedure for securing an alternative School placement will be put into operation: Details in the evidence will be anonymised and will be sent to the Professional Co-ordinating Mentors of three potential alternative Schools, with the

additional proviso that any contact with a potential alternative School will indicate that, in the opinion of the NELTA Principal/Director, the issues which led to the original School expressing serious professional concerns about the trainee were unjustified. In the period between the meeting with the NELTA Principal/Director and the recommencing of the trainee's placement in a new School, the trainee will be suspended from the Programme;

g) if the decision of the NELTA Principal/Director is that the grounds for concern of the School, which though of a very serious nature, fall short of a 'failing' profile on the Professional Practice Report, were justified, the trainee will be given the option of appealing against this decision and, pending a decision by the trainee regarding an appeal, the trainee will be suspended from the Programme;

h) the trainee will be given a period of one month from the date of their meeting with the NELTA Principal/Director to appeal. Any appeal must be made in writing to the NELTA Principal/Director. The trainee should follow the published Appeals Procedure.

i) if the trainee's appeal is successful, the process of securing an alternative School placement for them will begin and they will be allowed to resume their studies on the Programme once an alternative School placement has been secured. The NELTA Principal/Director will seek advice from the NELTA Tutor as to possible placement schools. The NELTA Principal/Director will then write to the Professional Co-ordinating Mentor of three possible alternative Schools, anonymising the details and indicating that there had been an issue regarding the trainee which had resulted in the trainee being removed from their original School but being allowed, after appeal, to continue on the Programme. If this situation arises during Blocks 1 the requirement will be that at least two schools will need to agree to place the trainee, as at that stage in the Programme they will need a placement in two schools. If the successful appeal occurs during Block 2, then it will be sufficient for one school to agree to offer a placement. An agreed timeline for the placement will be determined by NELTA and the School(s) and communicated to the trainee. The NELTA Principal/Director is unable to guarantee that a placement will be found or, if one is found, the precise timing of any renewed placement. If the appropriate number of schools has been approached and a placement has not been found, the NELTA Principal/Director will inform the trainee of the situation and advise that the trainee ought to explore the possibility of finding a placement themselves. If this is done, the NELTA Principal/Director will need to approve the school. The NELTA Principal/Director will also inform any School found by the trainee that the trainee had successfully appealed against a decision by a school to remove them from a placement, but that the renewal of the placement in their original school(s) or in an alternative School found by NELTA had not been possible. Trainees in this position of having to embark on an alternative placement will need to be aware that contextual factors could mean that the renewal of a placement may overrun into a new academic year; and,

j) if the trainee's appeal is unsuccessful, or if the trainee decides not to appeal, then it will be considered that the trainee has failed the programme.

## **5 Removal of placement in relation to DBS information**

a) Before they can be offered a place on the Programme, all successful applicants are asked to complete a Suitability Declaration in which they are asked a range of questions relating to their criminal convictions, cautions, disciplinary action etc. If the Suitability Declaration is clear, an offer of a place on the Programme will be made to the successful applicant. If successful applicants answer 'yes' to any questions on the Suitability Declaration, the nature of the declaration is taken into account in making a decision about whether it can be considered satisfactory and the applicant can be allowed to register. If, as a result of these initial deliberations, the issues disclosed is one that is regarded as sufficiently serious as to warrant consultation with school colleagues, a letter is sent to the Professional Co-ordinating Mentors of three Partnership Schools, anonymising the conviction details provided and asking whether the school would be prepared to accept on placement a trainee with that specific conviction profile. If the feedback from a majority of the schools asked is positive, then NELTA will proceed with making the applicant an offer.

b) if the responses from the schools approached before the start of the Programme are negative, indicating that schools would not be willing to offer a placement to an applicant with that conviction profile, the NELTA Principal/Director will write to the applicant explaining the situation and rejecting them from the Programme;

c) all successful applicants are asked to begin the process of obtaining a DBS Disclosure if possible by at least three months before the start of the Programme. It may, however, be some time before the relevant DBS Disclosure is seen by NELTA, and the trainee's placement in the School might already have begun. Once the DBS documentation is seen by NELTA, it will be checked against the information provided by the trainee on the Suitability Declaration. If there is evidence of information about convictions having been withheld, the Professional Co-ordinating Mentor at the School will be informed by the NELTA Principal/Director and the trainee's placement on the Programme will be terminated on the basis of the trainee having withheld information related to criminal convictions.

d) the vast majority of DBS Disclosures are seen by NELTA before the start of the Programme. In those cases where the Disclosure has not been seen before the trainees' first day in school, the NELTA Principal/Director checks the names of those whose forms have not been received against the barred list.

e) in the event of this check indicating that a successful applicant has been convicted of a crime in that would place him or her on the barred list their registration will be terminated. The NELTA Principal/Director will inform both the applicant and the designated School of this decision; and,

f) if the individual does not appear on the barred list, the NELTA Principal/Director will send a letter to the Professional Co-ordinating mentor at the School informing them of the situation. It is the School's decision as to whether the trainee will be allowed to go into the School on the basis that they will be accompanied and supervised whilst on school premises by a member of staff who has been successfully DBS checked. Once the DBS documentation has been received by NELTA the School will be informed by the NELTA Principal/Director if there are any issues emerging.

## **6 Removal of placement by School related to Practice of Teaching**

The Support Plan and Cause for Concern Procedures outlines the appropriate procedures for dealing with this situation:

Where initial concerns about a trainee's practice of teaching have emerged through the School, the School Subject Mentor or, if appropriate, the School Professional Co-ordinating Mentor should contact the NELTA Tutor with details of the concern(s). At this stage, the trainee's attention should be drawn to these concerns, the Support Plan and Cause for Concern Procedures should be implemented.

## **7 Removal of placement as a result of a school being placed on 'Special Measures' following an OfSTED Inspection**

a) Where a placement school undergoes an OfSTED Inspection that results in it being placed under 'Special Measures', the guidelines indicate that the placement can continue where the NELTA Principal/Director and senior colleagues from the placement school (Headteacher and/or Professional Co-ordinating Mentor) are in agreement that trainees can receive the degree of support that they require to meet their professional needs during the placement;

b) Where the NELTA Principal/Director feels that trainees on placement in a 'Special Measures' school will not receive the degree of professional support required, the NELTA Principal/Director will contact the Headteacher of the School and indicate that NELTA wishes the placement to terminate. In those circumstances, the NELTA Principal/Director will initiate the procedures for finding alternative placement(s) for the trainee(s) involved. Alternative placement schools will be

informed by the NELTA Principal/Director that the reason for trainees being moved is unrelated to their performance on the Programme;

c) Where the Headteacher from the 'Special Measures' school indicates that the school is unable to provide the trainee/trainees with the degree of professional support required at that stage in the Programme, the school will withdraw the placement offer. In those circumstances, the NELTA Principal/Director will initiate the procedures for finding alternative placement(s) for the trainee(s) involved. Alternative placement schools will be informed by the NELTA Principal/Director that the reason for trainees being moved is unrelated to their performance on the Programme.