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Teach First

# Early Career Training Programme

ECT PROGRAMME GUIDE | YEAR 1

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# Introduction

Congratulations on beginning your journey as an Early Career Teacher! This programme guide has been created to support you through your first year on the Teach First Early Career Training Programme (ECTP)—a programme designed to help you grow into a confident, skilled, and reflective teacher.

Over the next two years, you'll take part in a structured and supportive training experience that's aligned with your statutory induction. The ECTP is not an extra or separate programme—it's the foundation of your professional development as a new teacher.

## **In this programme guide, you'll find:**

- A clear overview of what the ECTP involves and how it supports your development
- Details about your responsibilities and what's expected of you
- Information about the people who will support you—your mentor, induction tutor, seminar facilitators, and delivery partner
- A breakdown of your training structure, including modules, seminars, and weekly mentor meetings
- Guidance on how to stay engaged and make the most of your training
- An explanation of how the ECTP fits into your statutory induction, including progress reviews and formal assessments.

We're excited to support you as you begin what we hope will be a long, rewarding, and impactful career in teaching.

# About the Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE)

The Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE) is a two-year programme designed to support all Early Career Teachers (ECTs) at the beginning of their teaching journey. It aims to help you develop the essential knowledge and skills needed to meet the Teachers' Standards and apply them effectively in your practice.

## **As part of your entitlement, you can expect:**

1. A structured Early Career Training Programme (ECTP) – designed to support your development and deepen your understanding of effective teaching.
2. Consistent, high-quality support from a trained mentor – someone who will guide, challenge, and encourage you throughout the two years.
3. A well-designed training programme for your mentor – so they're fully equipped to support your growth.
4. Protected time off timetable – in addition to your PPA time, giving you space to reflect, plan, and engage with your training.
5. Regular progress reviews and two formal assessments – to help you reflect on your progress and ensure you're on track with the Teachers' Standards.

## **Department for Education (DfE) Funding**

Your ECTE is fully funded by the DfE, so there's no cost to you. This funding helps your school provide the support you're entitled to, including:

- A reduced timetable – You'll have 10% less teaching time in your first year and 5% less in your second year, on top of your usual PPA time. This gives you space to focus on your development and training.
- Time for your mentor – Your mentor is also given time to support you effectively and take part in their own training, so they can offer you the best possible guidance.

To make sure this support continues, your school's funding depends on you engaging with the programme.

# Working with Teach First

Teach First is an educational charity whose mission is to make the UK education system work for every child, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. We aim to end educational inequality by training great teachers and developing strong school leaders, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential, regardless of where they grow up.

Teach First is an Ofsted outstanding Lead Provider of the Early Career Framework (ECF) since 2020. We are proud to be able to continue to offer ECTs and their mentors a high quality and impactful programme as a part of the ECF. By working with Teach First your school will benefit from:

- **Experience:** Teach First has over 20 years of experience helping training teachers and leaders.
- **School-led approach:** The programme is developed with schools, for schools.
- **Local delivery:** Programme delivered by local experienced teachers.
- **Expertise:** Evidence informed and research led training, supported by experts in education.
- **Flexibility:** Online learning resources that fit around teachers' timetables.
- **Subject/phase specific approach:** Subject and phase specific support for ECTs and mentors.
- **Workload and wellbeing:** ECT and mentor workload and wellbeing at the heart of the programmes design.
- **Additional support:** Access to optional modules related to school leadership and teaching in special schools.

*"This high-quality programme is specifically designed to fit in with Early Career Teachers reduced timetable in order that their workload is manageable. ECTs are provided with a variety of stimulus to support them in building a strong and rich knowledge base which can be embedded immediately in classroom practice. Regular seminars facilitated by experts provide ECTs with opportunities to reflect upon and discuss current teaching strategies in their phase and subject specific areas.*

*Independent learning, accessible online, extends ECTs thinking beyond the seminar; all materials are underpinned by credible research. These two components coupled with frequent mentoring interactions ensures all ECTs are receiving the best possible support as they embark on the most phenomenal career!"*

**Emma Taylor – Deputy Director –  
Teach School Hubs, Bright Futures.**

# Roles and Responsibilities

Throughout your two-year ECTP, you'll be supported by a team of people who are all focused on helping you grow and succeed. Here's a quick guide to who they are and what they do:

## Your Mentor

Your mentor is a subject or phase specialist in your school. They'll meet with you regularly to support your development, help you reflect on your practice, and guide you through your training. They play a key role in your progress throughout the ECTP.

## Your Induction Tutor

Appointed by your headteacher or principal, your induction tutor oversees your overall development. They'll monitor your progress, provide support, and coordinate your formal assessments at the end of each year. These assessments are based on the Teachers' Standards and are shared with the appropriate body. You might also hear them referred to as the induction coordinator or induction lead.

## Seminar Facilitators

These are experienced teachers and trainers who lead your ECTP seminars. Whether online or in person, they'll guide you through key topics and help you connect theory to practice.

## Delivery Partners

Delivery partners are teaching school hubs and multi-academy trusts (MATs) that work with Teach First to deliver the ECTP in your local area. They are highly experienced in training and supporting teachers and lead both local and national education networks.

Your delivery partner is responsible for running the ECTP in your region, which includes delivering your seminars, supporting your mentor, and ensuring the programme is tailored to your school's context. They play a key role in making sure your training is high-quality, relevant, and impactful.

The table below gives you a clearer picture of who's responsible for what part of your entitlement. Everyone around you—your induction tutor, your mentor, and you—has a key role to play in making sure your experience is supportive, structured, and successful.

<b>Responsibilities</b>	
<b>Induction Tutor</b>	<p>Should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be a senior leader in school with responsibility for overseeing the effective implementation of the ECTE</li> <li>• make sure the programme complements statutory induction</li> <li>• make sure timetables allow for ECT and mentor engagement</li> <li>• maintain ECT and mentor engagement</li> <li>• select an appropriate mentor</li> <li>• follow the process for changing mentors</li> <li>• quality assure the programme</li> </ul>
<b>Mentor</b>	<p>Should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be an experienced teacher who is paired with the early career teacher to support them directly through the programme</li> <li>• attend the mentor Welcome Conference</li> <li>• monitor ECT engagement</li> <li>• arrange weekly interactions</li> <li>• select the highest leverage area of development as part of an instructional coaching cycle</li> <li>• complete mentor diagnostic to tailor ECTs curriculum</li> <li>• attend mentor training seminars</li> <li>• engage with weekly mentor self-directed study materials</li> <li>• inform delivery partners or induction tutors if they cannot attend a seminar</li> </ul>
<b>ECT</b>	<p>Should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attend the ECT Welcome Conference</li> <li>• engage with weekly self-directed study</li> <li>• attend ECT training seminars</li> <li>• inform induction tutor or delivery partner if they cannot attend a seminar</li> <li>• attend and engage in weekly mentor interactions</li> </ul>

It's important to stay engaged with the programme. If you're unable to meet the engagement requirements, you may be withdrawn from the ECTP, and your school would need to find another way for you to complete your statutory induction.

You, your mentor, and your induction tutor are all expected to follow the Teach First Programme Member Code of Conduct. You'll find this in Appendix B, and it's important that each of you reads it carefully and understands what's expected throughout the programme.

# Early Career Training Programme

## Structure

Before we dive into the structure of your training programme, it's helpful to get familiar with the two key online platforms you'll be using throughout your journey.

### My Teach First

My Teach First is the online platform that both ECTs and mentors use to access their self-directed study materials. You will receive a welcome email, followed by a separate email containing your My Teach First login information.

If you do not receive your login details within seven days of your welcome email, or if you experience any technical issues, you can get in touch via the 'Contact Us' button on My Teach First. Your query will be directed to colleagues in the Teach First Contact Centre, who will work to resolve any issues.

### Brightspace

You will be directed towards Brightspace when you access the My Teach First platform. Brightspace is the learning platform that hosts all of your self-directed study materials for each module – you will access this content regularly to complete the programme.

# Year 1 at a glance

## 6 Modules (1 per half term)

- 1 How can you create an effective learning environment?
- 2 How do pupils learn?
- 3 What makes classroom practice effective?
- 4 How can you use assessment and feedback to greatest effect?
- 5 How can you support all pupils to succeed?
- 6 How can you design a coherent curriculum?

## Optional

### Excellent Teaching in Special School module

## Time commitment

### For ECTs

- **Welcome Conference**  
Full day (6 hours)
- **Self-directed study**  
3 hours 45 minutes per half term
- **Seminars**  
2 x 1 hour 30 minutes seminars per half term
- **Mentoring**  
Weekly sessions, 60 minutes in length

## Time commitment

### For mentors

- **Welcome Conference**  
Full day (6 hours)
- **Self-directed study weekly overview videos**  
1 hour per half term
- **Seminars**  
5 x 1 hour 30 minutes across the year
- **Mentoring**  
Weekly sessions, 1 hour in length
- **Diagnostic activity**  
as part of the 1-hour self-directed study

# Your Year 1 Training

## ECT Welcome Conference

Your year begins with a full-day, in-person Welcome Conference. This is your introduction to the ECTP and a chance to connect with other ECTs, explore the programme structure, and begin your professional development.

An outline of the content of the conference is below.

Session	Title
1	The Teach First Early Career Training Programme
2	Developing your expertise
3	An introduction to instructional coaching
4	Using praise and consequences effectively*
5	Your wellbeing

*\*This session is also the first seminar of module 1*

## ECT self-directed study materials

Following the Welcome Conference, you will begin engaging with your self-directed study materials. These weekly sessions are hosted on the Brightspace Learning Platform, which is accessed via My Teach First.

Each module is designed to be flexible and manageable alongside your teaching.

- 6 modules across the academic year (one per half term)
- 3 hours 45 minutes of study per module
- Broken into five weekly sessions
- Includes interactive activities, reflection tasks, and knowledge checks

Self-directed module titles	
Half term 1	Module 1: How can you create an effective learning environment?
Half term 2	Module 2: How do pupils learn?
Half term 3	Module 3: What makes effective classroom practice?
Half term 4	Module 4: How can you use assessment and feedback to greatest effect?
Half term 5	Module 5: How can you support all pupils to succeed?
Half term 6	Module 6: How can you design a coherent curriculum?

## Module seminars

Each module includes two 90-minute seminars, where you'll explore key pedagogical concepts and strategies with other ECTs, reflect on your learning, and hear from expert colleagues.

Module seminars		
Module	Seminar 1	Seminar 2
<b>Module 1:</b> How can you create an effective learning environment?	<b>Seminar 1:</b> Using praise and consequences effectively *	<b>Seminar 2:</b> Holding high expectations of all pupils
<b>Module 2:</b> How do pupils learn?	<b>Seminar 1:</b> Avoiding working memory overload	<b>Seminar 2:</b> Building well-organised mental models
<b>Module 3:</b> What makes effective classroom practice?	<b>Seminar 1:</b> Using examples and non-examples	<b>Seminar 2:</b> Using questioning to extend and challenge thinking
<b>Module 4:</b> How can you use assessment and feedback to greatest effect?	<b>Seminar 1:</b> Structuring questions to anticipate and identify misconceptions	<b>Seminar 2:</b> Peer and self-assessment
<b>Module 5:</b> How can you support all pupils to succeed?	<b>Seminar 1:</b> Developing an inclusive classroom	<b>Seminar 2:</b> Supporting pupils with a greater level of need
<b>Module 6:</b> How can you design a coherent curriculum?	<b>Seminar 1:</b> Sequencing concepts, knowledge and skills	<b>Seminar 2:</b> Developing reading and writing

*\*This seminar is delivered as part of the ECT Welcome Conference.*

## Engagement with training

The ECTP is designed to help you grow and succeed in your teaching career. To get the most out of it, it's important to stay actively involved in all aspects of the training.

This includes:

- Attending your seminars
- Completing your self-directed study
- Taking part in weekly mentor interactions

If you ever find it difficult to keep up with any part of the programme, don't hesitate to speak to your mentor or induction tutor. They're there to support you and can help you find ways to stay on track.

Remember, this programme is here to support your development. The more you engage, the more confident and capable you'll become in your teaching practice.

# Your Responsibilities on the ECTP

As an ECT you play an active role in your own development. Here's a breakdown of what's expected of you throughout year 1 of the ECTP, and how each part is designed to support your growth in the classroom.

## 1. Engage with self-directed study

Each half term, you'll complete 3 hours and 45 minutes of self-directed study. This is broken into five weekly sessions and can be completed at your own pace.

You'll access your study materials through Brightspace, via My Teach First. Each session includes interactive content, extensive classroom exemplification, reflection activities, and a short knowledge check to help you consolidate your learning.

### Tailoring your learning pathway

At the start of each module, both you and your mentor will complete a short diagnostic activity (around 10 minutes). This helps you reflect on your current knowledge and how confidently you're applying key concepts in your classroom practice.

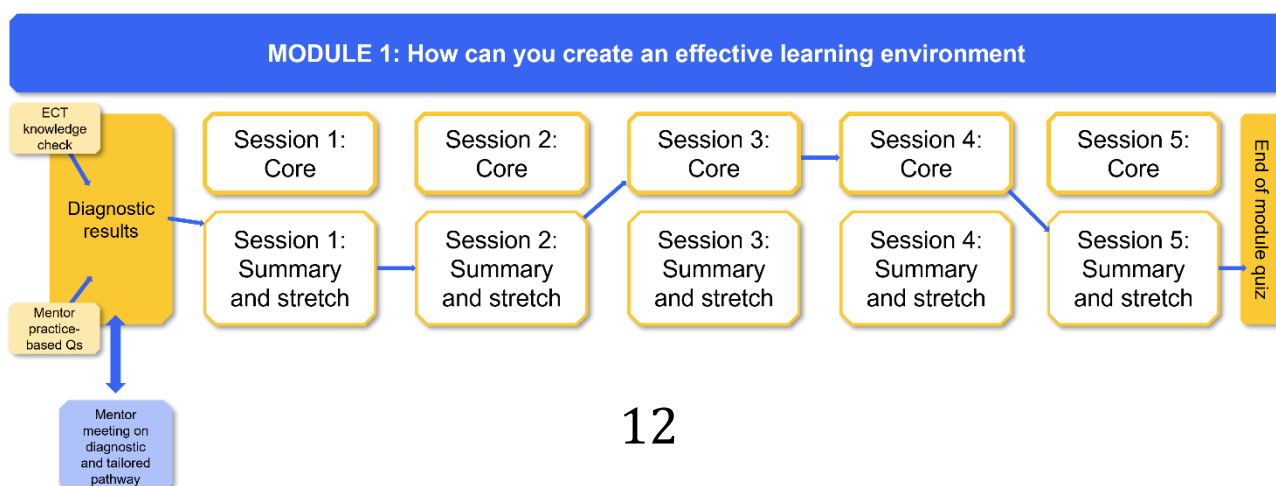
Based on your responses—and your mentor's observations—you'll agree on a tailored pathway through the module during your first mentor meeting of the half term. This ensures your self-directed study time is focused on the areas that will benefit you most.

You'll be guided toward one or both of the following types of content:

- Core materials – These build strong foundational knowledge in the key concepts covered in the module.
- Summary and stretch materials – These offer a concise review of key ideas and challenge you to apply them in more complex or unfamiliar classroom scenarios.

Each session—whether core or stretch—is designed to take around 45 minutes and your learning pathway through each module will be personalised and responsive to your development.

For example, a tailored pathway through Module 1 might recommend engaging with a combination of core sessions to build confidence in behaviour management, alongside summary and stretch sessions to deepen your use of praise and consequences.



## 2. Attend module seminars

You'll take part in two 90-minute seminars per half term, led by experienced facilitators. These sessions are designed to:

- Deepen your understanding of key teaching concepts
- Explore practical strategies you can apply in your classroom
- Reflect on your own teaching in a supportive environment
- Collaborate with other ECTs and share experiences

There's no follow-up work required for seminars—just come ready to learn, reflect, and contribute. If you are unable to attend a specific seminar you must inform your delivery partner.

## 3. Take part in weekly mentor interactions

Each week in year 1, you'll meet with your mentor for a focused mentor interaction. These are a core part of your training and should be protected time in your timetable.

Your mentor will use an instructional coaching cycle to help you:

- Reflect on your teaching
- Practise specific techniques
- Receive clear, actionable feedback
- Apply what you've learned in real time

You can use **Appendix A: Precise action record** to document your weekly next steps in a clear and structured way.

### How it works

Each week, your mentor interaction will be shaped by two key inputs:

1. Your Brightspace submission Before your meeting, you'll complete a short task in Brightspace and share it with your mentor—either through the platform itself or another agreed method. This task might include:
  - Sharing a lesson plan or part of a plan
  - Sharing a set of questions you plan to use in class
  - A reflection on a recent teaching experience
2. A short classroom observation (if applicable) Some weeks, your mentor may also carry out a brief observation of your teaching (no more than 10 minutes). This gives them an insight into your everyday teaching practice and may highlight specific areas to explore further.

Your weekly mentor interaction will draw on both your Brightspace task and any observation insights. Together, you'll work through a cycle of feedback, planning, and practice—helping you refine your teaching and apply new strategies straight away.

We'll explore more about the power of instructional coaching in the next section of this guide.

# Instructional Coaching – what it is and why we use it

As part of your weekly mentoring interactions, your mentor will use a structured feedback model based on instructional coaching. This approach is central to how you'll be supported throughout the programme—and it's designed to help you grow your teaching practice in a focused, practical way.

## Why instructional coaching?

Instructional coaching is a well-evidenced approach used to develop expertise across a range of domains—including sport, music, and teaching—and is effective for novices, intermediates, and experts alike. Research shows that instructional coaching has a greater impact on pupil outcomes than many other forms of professional development.

Unlike traditional lesson observations, which can be broad and lack actionable guidance, instructional coaching focuses on:

- Precise, high-leverage actions identified by the mentor.
- Directed, specific feedback rather than open-ended questioning
- Mentor-led interactions, where the mentor adopts the role of expert and guides the ECT through modelling and rehearsal.

This approach contrasts with traditional coaching models, which often rely on reflective questioning led by the teacher. Instead, instructional coaching is mentor-directed, ensuring clarity, focus, and practical next steps.

## The feedback model

Each week, you'll meet with your mentor for a focused interaction. These interactions follow a five-stage feedback model, shown in the visual below:



Most of your time together will be spent in the final three stages—setting actions, planning, and practising—to help you embed new strategies into your teaching.

## Setting precise action steps

One of the most important parts of instructional coaching is setting precise action steps—small, clear changes that will have the biggest impact on your teaching.

Your mentor will help you identify these steps based on your current strengths and areas for growth. These steps are:

- Specific – focused on the “how,” not just the “what”
- Actionable – something you can practise and apply immediately
- High-leverage – chosen because they'll make a meaningful difference to your pupils

# Your Statutory Induction and the ECTP

As an ECT, you're completing a statutory induction—a formal two-year process that supports your transition into the teaching profession. The ECTP is designed to be a core part of this induction, not an extra or separate training course.

## How the ECTP supports your Induction

The ECTP provides the training, structure, and support you need to meet the Teachers' Standards. It's fully aligned with the ITTECF framework and is recognised by the DfE as a high-quality induction programme.

## Professional progress reviews

Each term (except when a formal assessment is scheduled), your induction tutor will meet with you for a professional progress review. These are short, 30-minute check-ins to:

- Review your progress against the Teachers' Standards
- Discuss your development and any support you might need
- Keep a written record of whether you're on track

You don't need to create new evidence for these reviews. Instead, you'll share relevant materials you've already gathered—like lesson plans, reflections, or feedback—as agreed with your induction tutor.

These reviews are developmental, not formal assessments. They're designed to help you stay on track and avoid surprises later in the year.

## Formal assessments

You'll have two formal assessments during your induction—one at the end of each year. These are carried out by your induction tutor (or headteacher) and are a statutory requirement.

### Here's what you need to know:

- You don't need to prepare anything new—just draw on your existing work and training
- The assessment is based on the Teachers' Standards, not the ECTP
- You'll be kept informed of your progress throughout
- After each assessment, you'll be asked to add your comments to the report
- The report will be signed by you, your induction tutor, and your headteacher
- A copy will be sent to the appropriate body, and you'll keep the original

The final assessment at the end of year 2 will inform whether you've successfully met the Teachers' Standards and completed your induction.

## What you can do

- Stay engaged with your training and mentor meetings
- Keep in touch with your induction tutor about your progress
- Ask questions if you're unsure about anything related to your Induction
- Use your reviews as a chance to reflect and grow

Beginning your career as an ECT marks the start of a journey filled with opportunities—for growth, for lasting impact in the lives of your pupils, and for meaningful professional development.

We hope this programme guide has provided a solid foundation to support you in the months ahead. We wish you every success as you take these first steps in what we hope will be a long, rewarding career in teaching.

# Appendix A: Precise action record

<b>Module 1 – How can you create an effective learning environment?</b>			
<b>Focus</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Progress towards previous actions</b>	<b>Precise action(s) given</b>
Establishing effective routines			
Approaches to developing motivation			
Least invasive behaviour management strategies			
Addressing complex behaviour			
Techniques for holding high expectations			

<b>Module 2 – How do pupils learn?</b>			
<b>Focus</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Progress towards previous actions</b>	<b>Precise action(s) given</b>
Building on prior knowledge			
Breaking down information in small steps			
Using worked and partially completed examples			
Using low-stakes retrieval practice			
Teaching metacognitive strategies			

<b>Module 3 – What makes classroom practice effective?</b>			
<b>Focus</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Progress towards previous actions</b>	<b>Precise action(s) given</b>
Making abstract ideas concrete			
Using 'Think Aloud'			
Effective guided practice			
Pupil collaboration			
Questioning			

**Module 4 – How can you use assessment and feedback to greatest effect?**

Focus	Date	Progress towards previous actions	Precise action(s) given
Planned assessment opportunities			
Anticipating and identifying misconceptions through questioning			
Monitoring independent practice			
Giving effective verbal feedback			
Making judgements based on performance			

**Module 5 – How can you support all pupils to succeed?**

Focus	Date	Progress towards previous actions	Precise action(s) given
Identifying barriers to learning			
Using adaptive teaching strategies			
Pre-teaching			
Using the graduated approach			
Working with stakeholders			

**Module 6 – How can you design a coherent curriculum?**

Focus	Date	Progress towards previous actions	Precise action(s) given
Discuss and decide upon a suitable topic for designing a scheme of work			
Identifying and sequencing essential concepts, knowledge and skills			
Tackling common misconceptions			
Developing pupils' vocabulary			
Supporting the transfer of learning			

# Appendix B: Programme member code of conduct

Teach First programmes are designed for you to learn, progress, and gain knowledge and insight so that you can excel professionally and make a difference in your school. To enable learning for all, it is important that a professional, safe, supportive, and open environment is maintained to allow everyone to succeed and thrive.

This code of conduct sets out the expectations that we have of all our programme members on all Teach First programmes. By taking up your place on a Teach First programme, you agree to abide by these expectations.

## GENERAL CONDUCT

- Do not engage in any activity or behaviour which would bring Teach First or the teaching profession into disrepute.
- Do not engage in the bullying or harassment of others.
- We will not tolerate language that seeks to undermine or intimidate others. This includes but is not limited to; racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or ableist language.
- Ensure that your language comes from an intention of being respectful and open.
- Consider the impact of your actions or lack of action (including support through silence) on others.
- Be polite and tolerant of the contributions of others; ensure everybody can speak and be heard on discussion forums, at events, or in event chat functions if online.

## UNDERSTANDING

- Recognise the diversity of the Teach First community.
- Be tolerant, respect and act in accordance with everyone's lived experiences, boundaries, stated personal pronouns, circumstances, and wishes.
- Recognise that some programme members may have reasonable adjustments in place to allow them fair and equal access to the programme.

## OPENNESS

- Be willing and open to hearing different points of view and engage in debate where you feel comfortable to support the development of others, including constructive challenge and peer support.

## PROFESSIONALISM

- Be punctual: join each live session on time, use the stated attendance policy, and follow the absence process if you are unable to attend.
- Adhere to any specific dress codes for your learning environment: this may include standards of professional dress laid down by the setting you are in (e.g. a school).
- Complete all work on time, on your own (unless it is a collaborative task), and ahead of any live interaction if required.
- Respond in a timely manner to any communications, requests, or instructions from delivery partner staff.

## ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

- Do not share any Zoom links or other joining instructions on any public platform, or with anyone who is not authorised to attend the event.
- Do not share personal details, inappropriate messages, or content, or use discussions or forums as a platform to harass, bully or victimise.
- Ensure you have adequate technology, tools, materials for your session and you have tested them beforehand. This may include video, microphone and speakers.
- Ensure that, where possible, you have turned off or silenced your mobile phone to avoid distracting others.
- Ensure that, where possible, you have joined a live session from a suitable location (not a noisy or public place, for example) to avoid distracting others.
- Always keep your contact details up to date (via My Teach First) to ensure we can provide you with relevant information.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

- Use social media in a responsible and respectful manner – whether using a social media account which refers to Teach First (including a Teach First Facebook group) or your own personal account (whether or not it refers to your role).
- Do not post or share content which is abusive, threatening, defamatory, discriminatory or otherwise harmful or offensive.
- Teach First is an independent charity and must remain politically neutral. You must ensure that your social media activity does not suggest, explicitly or implicitly that Teach First has any party-political stance or allegiance to a particular political party.

## REPORTING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

If you are being subject to or notice that someone else is being subject to behaviour that contravenes this agreement, or have any other concerns, please take one of the following actions:

- If you feel comfortable and able, raise it directly with the individual causing the problem, at the time it arises, or with the member of staff at an appropriate opportunity.
- If you are not able to do this, then please report the incident to Teach First in any of the following ways (telling whoever you feel most comfortable):
  - Report it using the 'contact us' function on My Teach First to send an email to the Teach First contact centre.
  - Send an email to [teachfirstwelfare@teachfirst.org.uk](mailto:teachfirstwelfare@teachfirst.org.uk), which enables programme members to make safe and confidential disclosures outside of their personal support network. This is managed confidentially by the Teach First legal team.

We commit to taking all incidents seriously and will work with you to ensure your concerns are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

You should report any child safeguarding incidents in line with your school's child safeguarding policy.