



# Early Career Training Programme

## Year 2 Mentor Programme Guide 2026

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# Introduction

Welcome to Year 2 of the Teach First Early Career Training Programme (ECTP).

Thank you for continuing to mentor an Early Career Teacher (ECT). Your role as a mentor is crucial to helping them have the best possible start to their career.

The ECTP has been developed in collaboration with schools and sector experts and is underpinned by the latest educational research. It is designed to be both practical and impactful, supporting ECTs to build strong foundations in their teaching practice.

## This programme guide will help you to:

- Understand your role and responsibilities as a mentor for Year 2 of the programme.
- Gain a clear overview of the requirements and model of Year 2 of the Teach First ECTP.



# About the Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE)

The Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE) is a 2-year entitlement that supports teachers at the start of their career.

It is at the heart of the DfE's teacher recruitment and retention strategy to transform the support teachers get when they first join the profession.

It has been developed in collaboration with schools and sector experts and is underpinned by the latest educational research. It is designed to be both practical and impactful – supporting ECTs to develop their professional skills and provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the teachers' standards.

There are five main elements to their entitlement:

- Access to an Early Career Training Programme.
- Mentor support for ECTs.
- A comprehensive training programme for mentors.
- Time off timetable for ECTs and mentors.
- Regular progress reviews and 2 formal assessments for ECTs against the teachers' standards.

## DfE Funding

The ECTE is fully funded by the DfE. Schools receive funding to reduce an ECTs timetable in Year 1 by 10% (additional to their PPA time), and 5% in Year 2. This funding is also used to provide mentors with time to both work with their ECT and engage in their own training.

The funding schools receive is dependent on ECTs and mentors' engagement with the programme. Teach First will collect engagement data for ECTs and mentors, which will be shared with the DfE.

Full details around eligibility and funding for the ECTE can be found [here](#).

# 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.

*"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

It is important for everyone involved in the ECTP to have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities.

So, to help you understand yours, in the table below we've outlined your role and key responsibilities alongside those of your induction tutor and ECT.

| Role                   | Responsibility                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Induction Tutor</b> | The induction tutor will: <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> |

| Role          | Responsibility                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Mentor</b> | The mentor will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be an experienced teacher who is paired with the ECT to support them directly through the programme.</li><li>• Attend the mentor Welcome Conference.</li><li>• Monitor ECT engagement.</li><li>• Arrange weekly interactions in Year 1, fortnightly in Year 2.</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 mentor self-directed study materials.</li><li>• Inform Delivery Partner or induction tutors if they cannot attend a seminar.</li></ul> |

| Role       | Responsibility                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ECT</b> | The ECT will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attend the ECT Welcome Conferences.</li><li>• Engage with Year 1 and Year 2 self-directed study.</li><li>• Attend ECT training seminars.</li><li>• Inform induction tutor or mentor if they cannot attend a seminar.</li><li>• Attend and engage in all mentor interactions.</li><li>• Participate in 'Engage with an expert' opportunities in Year 2.</li></ul> |

Alongside the Induction Tutor and ECT themselves, there are two further roles that you will interact with:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Delivery Partner</b>     | <p>A Delivery Partner is an organisation working in partnership with Teach First to deliver the ECTP in your local area. They are experienced teacher training providers, Teaching School Hubs, multi-academy trusts, or other established organisations with a strong track record in professional development.</p> <p>Your Delivery Partner will take the lead in running the ECTP locally. This includes facilitating training sessions, supporting both ECTs and mentors, and ensuring the programme is delivered effectively in your school. Because they work locally, Delivery Partners are able to provide context-specific support and build networks that connect schools, ECTs, and mentors in your area.</p> <p>All Delivery Partners have extensive experience in training and supporting teachers, as well as leading professional networks at both local and national levels.</p> |
| <b>Seminar Facilitators</b> | <p>Seminar facilitators are experienced practitioners who are experts in training teachers. Facilitators will be organised through Delivery Partners and your sessions will either be online or delivered in person.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## Your Wellbeing

As a mentor, your wellbeing is essential – not only for your own effectiveness, but also for the quality of support you provide to your ECT. Mentoring sits alongside your existing responsibilities, so it is important to be intentional in how you manage your time, energy, and boundaries.

Establishing clear ways of working early on can support this. Contracting, introduced during your first Welcome Conference session and revisited through your seminars, provides a helpful structure for setting expectations, agreeing boundaries, and building a positive working relationship from the outset.

This might include agreeing practical arrangements at an administrative level, setting shared goals and boundaries at a professional level, and being open about expectations and assumptions at a psychological level. Taking time to do this helps create a supportive, trusting relationship and can prevent unnecessary pressures. Seek support when needed and remember you are not expected to have all the answers.

By modelling sustainable working practices and protecting your own wellbeing, you create a positive and effective mentoring experience for both yourself and your ECT.

# Digital Platforms

Before we look in detail at the programme structure, it is important to introduce you to two learning platforms that will be referenced frequently throughout this guide.

## 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 both receive a welcome email, followed by a separate email containing your My Teach First login information.

If you or your ECT have not received your login details within seven days of your welcome email, or if you experience any technical issues, please 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

Once you have accessed My Teach First, you will be able to navigate to Brightspace, which is the learning platform that hosts all your, and your ECTs, online learning content. This is also where you will be able to monitor your ECTs engagement with their learning, and review submissions send to you by your ECT.

# ECT Programme - Year 2

## Year 2 at a glance

|                            | Theme 1                                              | Theme 2                                           |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Development Cycle 1</b> | Developing pupil's intrinsic motivation              | Anticipating and addressing common misconceptions |
| <b>Development Cycle 2</b> | Supporting pupils to develop subject-specific skills | Using structured talk to develop pupils' literacy |
| <b>Development Cycle 3</b> | Using meaningful and memorable explanations          | Developing a coherent curriculum                  |

### Optional Modules

#### Leadership Series

These five optional modules are available to ECTs throughout their second year of the programme. They are designed to help ECTs explore pathways into leadership roles within a school, supporting those who feel ready to begin taking on additional responsibilities as they approach the end of the programme.

The titles of these modules are:

- Stepping up into Primary Subject Leadership
- The Role of Careers Leaders as a Leadership Progression Route
- An introduction to effective mentoring
- Implementing Research into your Classroom
- Preparing for Middle Leadership with an NPQ

Each module is between 60 and 100 minutes in length and is designed to be flexible, allowing ECTs to dip in and out as needed.

#### Time Commitment for ECTs

- **Welcome Conference:** 6 hours
- **Diagnostic:** 10 minutes per term
- **Self-directed study:** 50 minutes per term
- **Seminars:** 2 x 90 minute seminars per term
- **Engage with an expert:** 2 x 60 minutes per term
- **Mentoring interactions:** 60 minutes fortnightly

# Year 2 ECT training summary

In Year 2 ECTs will begin by attending a full day Welcome Conference, designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to the second year of the programme. Here's what they'll learn about on the day:

## Welcome Conference

| Session | Title                                   |
|---------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1       | An introduction to Year 2 of the ECTP   |
| 2       | Maximising the Development Cycles       |
| 3       | Sustainable workload                    |
| 4       | Networking for professional development |
| 5       | Inclusive Practice                      |

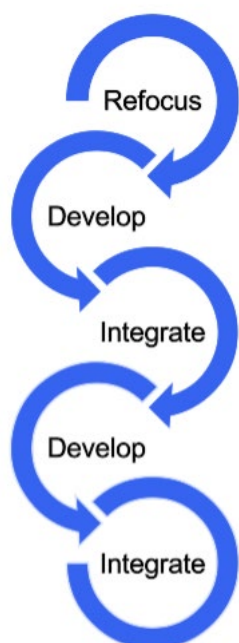
## Development Cycles and seminars

You and your ECT will complete one Development Cycle each term. Each cycle can last up to 12 weeks, but this can be adjusted to fit the length of your school terms, so some cycles may be shorter.

The purpose of the Development Cycle is to help your ECT focus on **one or two key areas of their practice for development over the term**. The focus should be something that will make a real difference to their classroom practice and to pupil outcomes. The focus should be highly tailored to your ECT and their individual development needs.

To support you and your ECT to consider high leverage development areas, each Development Cycle starts with a diagnostic activity around the themes of the cycle. These themes have been selected as they are challenging aspects of the ITTECF to implement well, and your ECT may need more time to embed them confidently into their practice.

## Development Cycle structure



The Development Cycle itself is split into 5 stages, and you will work through each of these with your ECT across the term.

To help you explore the stages in more depth, a 'Supporting an ECT in Year 2' unit is available on Brightspace as part of your mentor self-directed training. The unit takes approximately 45 minutes to complete and includes practical examples and modelled videos that demonstrate what each stage can look like in practice. You can access and revisit the content at any point during the year, dipping in and out as needed to support your mentoring. This unit is where you can also access the Year 2 diagnostic questions you need to answer about your ECT each term.

Your 'Year 2 Mentor Handbook' also contains fortnightly agendas that can support you to lead your ECT through the cycle.

## Subject and phase specific seminars

Your ECT will attend two 90-minute subject or phase-specific seminars each term. These sessions provide an opportunity to discuss, collaborate and network with other ECTs teaching the same subject or phase within the local area. They are delivered by an expert facilitator from your Delivery Partner.

For each seminar, there is a small amount of pre-work, which ECTs will be introduced to during their self-directed study.

Below are the seminar titles for each Development Cycle.

| Development Cycle | Seminar 1                                            | Seminar 2                                         |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>          | Developing pupil's intrinsic motivation              | Anticipating and addressing common misconceptions |
| <b>2</b>          | Supporting pupils to develop subject-specific skills | Using structured talk to develop pupils' literacy |
| <b>3</b>          | Using meaningful and memorable explanations          | Developing a coherent curriculum                  |

## Year 2 ECT Engagement

It is important that ECTs engage fully with all aspects of their training.

They must demonstrate engagement with their training offer across the two years of the programme. As such, it is essential to proactively support ECTs in overcoming any challenges they may face in accessing or engaging with their training.

ECTs will be at risk of being withdrawn from the programme if they do not demonstrate sufficient engagement.

### What does my ECT need to do each term in Year 2?

|                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Answer diagnostic questions for each Development Cycle                                          | At the beginning of each Development Cycle, ECTs will answer a set of diagnostic questions that they will access through Brightspace. The diagnostic will help them to reflect on their current knowledge and understanding of the Development Cycle themes. This will take them approximately 10 minutes to complete. As their mentor, you are also required to complete the mentor side of the diagnostic at the beginning of each term.                                                           |
| Engage with 50 minutes of self-directed study per term                                          | Each term, ECTs will need to complete 50 minutes of self-directed study, at their own pace. This is broken down into two 25-minute units. To evidence engagement and learning, it is essential that ECTs <b>complete the 'knowledge check'</b> at the end of each session.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Attend module seminars                                                                          | ECTs are expected to attend two seminars <b>per term</b> . The specific delivery dates of these seminars will be determined by your Delivery Partner and may vary across the half term. There is pre work for each seminar.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Upload two 'Engage with an expert' observation or discussion proformas to Brightspace each term | During the two 'Develop' stage of the Development Cycle, ECTs should meet with an expert colleague for 60 minutes who can give them some further support with their development area. This could take the form of an observation or a discussion. E.g. a short drop-in observation of a colleague, a discussion with the SENDCo, or with the Oracy or Inclusion Lead. Your ECT is required to upload a short description of their observation/discussion to Brightspace using the proforma provided. |
| Attend fortnightly mentor interactions                                                          | In their second year, ECTs are expected to engage in fortnightly mentor interactions. These sessions are a vital part of the ECT's professional development and should be scheduled as a regular, protected time slot with you.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

# Mentoring interactions in Year 2

In your **Year 2 Mentor Handbook** you will find a detailed agenda that you can use to support you to run each mentor interaction in Year 2.

## The focus of mentor interactions

There are **six mentor interactions** within each Development Cycle. Each one has a different focus, depending on where they fall within each stage of the cycle. Typically, you will have three interactions per half term, depending on the length of the term.

The **Year 2 Mentor Handbook** provides a clear agenda for each interaction, along with prompts and suggested questions to help guide the discussion with your ECT.

## Preparing for mentoring interactions

It is important to keep track of where you and your ECT are within the Development Cycle so you can prepare for each interaction effectively.

Ahead of mentor interactions 4 and 6, you will need to arrange a short drop-in observation of your ECT (approximately once per half term). This will enable you to give focused feedback on how they are applying their learning in their chosen development area.

Your Year 2 Mentor Handbook provides detailed agendas to support each mentoring interaction. You can also access short overview videos (approximately 5 – 6 minutes) for each Development Cycle within your self-directed training on Brightspace, within the 'Supporting an ECT in Year 2' unit.

If you are a fully trained mentor, these videos are included within your Year 2 Mentor Handbook.

# The Feedback Model

Across both years of your mentor interactions, you will use a structured five stage **feedback model** grounded in the principles of instructional coaching. This model underpins the programme and is central to how you will support your ECT's development.

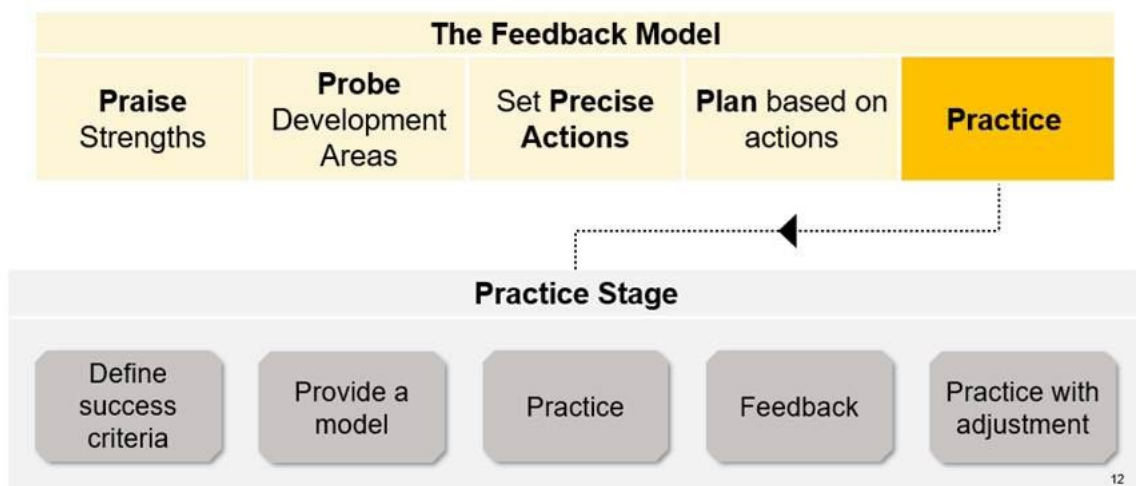
Instructional coaching is a well-evidenced approach for developing expertise across a range of domains, including sport, music, and teaching. It is effective for novices, intermediates, and experts alike, and research shows it can have a greater impact on pupil outcomes than many other forms of professional development.

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

- **Precise, high-leverage actions** identified by you, the mentor
- **Specific, directed feedback** rather than open-ended questioning
- **Mentor-led interactions**, where you act as the expert, guiding your ECT through modelling and rehearsal

This approach differs from traditional coaching models that often rely on teacher-led reflection. Instead, instructional coaching is **mentor-directed**, ensuring clarity, focus, and practical next steps.

During the Welcome Conference, you will receive training on how to use the five stage feedback model effectively. High-impact feedback goes beyond identifying strengths and areas for development—it creates opportunities for ECTs to **plan, rehearse, and refine specific actions** that can be immediately applied in the classroom.



Your **Year 1 and Year 2 Mentor Handbooks** also include detailed agendas to support you in applying the feedback model consistently and effectively.

## Child safeguarding concerns

You should report any child safeguarding concerns or incidents to your schools designated safeguarding lead, or in line with your school's child safeguarding policy.

# Appendix A: 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 our programme members on all Teach First programmes. By taking up your place on a Teach First programme, you are agreeing to abide by these expectations. Teach First reserves the right to take disciplinary action in response to any behaviour which we consider to be a breach of our expectations, whether a pattern of behaviour over time or a one-off incident. This includes Teach First's right, in our sole discretion, to remove you from the programme.

## GENERAL CONDUCT

- Recognise your position as a representative of Teach First and behave accordingly. 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 (for example, a school).
- Complete all work on time, on your own (unless it is a collaborative task), and ahead of any live interaction if required. Any pre work will be made clear to you via My Teach First, including the dates for completion.
- Respond in a timely manner to any communications, requests, or instructions from Teach First and delivery partner staff.

## ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

- Use Teach First online discussions or forums as a place to exchange professional information and engage in constructive exchanges that are directly focused on the outcomes of the programmatic content.

- 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.
- If uploading videos, ensure that there is no one else in the background, especially children.
- 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.
- If sharing screens, ensure that you only share the material relevant to the programme.
- 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:

1. If you feel comfortable and able, raise it directly with the individual causing the problem, at the time it arises, or with the event lead at an appropriate opportunity.
2. 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):
  - Share it directly with your Teach First support role, if you have one.
  - 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.
  - Report it directly to any other Teach First contact.

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. Where you are not yet employed by a school, please report any concern to your Teach First support role.

# Thank you



*Rewrite the future*

[www.teachfirst.org.uk/training-programme](http://www.teachfirst.org.uk/training-programme)

Teach First is a registered charity, no. 1098294

