



# Cause for Concern (Support Plan) Procedure

## Version 2

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<b>Related Documents:</b>	VNHTT Assessment Policy VNHTT Disciplinary Policy VNHTT Appeals Policy VNHTT Trainee Code of Conduct

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## **VNHTT Cause for Concern and Support Plan Policy**

### **1. Purpose and Principles**

VNHTT is committed to ensuring that all trainees are assessed fairly against clear and transparent criteria. The programme aims to develop highly effective classroom practitioners through supportive and developmental feedback. When a trainee is not meeting the required standards, this policy provides a structured framework to identify concerns early, provide targeted intervention, and ensure the trainee has every opportunity to succeed before any formal assessment of failure is made.

**Clarification** - VNHTT is committed to inclusivity and provides a **Trainee Support Pathway** for individuals with additional needs, disabilities, or personal circumstances that create barriers to learning. This pathway is distinct from a formal Support Plan; its primary objective is to implement **reasonable adjustments** and graduated support—such as targeted coaching, reduced timetables, or specialist services—to ensure trainees are empowered to achieve the expected progress. A formal **Support Plan** (Cause for Concern) would only be initiated if, despite these adjustments being in place and reviewed, a trainee still fails to meet the required curriculum or professional standards. This distinction ensures that performance is always assessed in the context of the support provided and that the Support Plan remains a specific intervention for unresolved progress concerns.

### **2. Triggers for a Cause for Concern**

A "Cause for Concern" is formally raised, and a **Support Plan** initiated, in the following circumstances:

- **Curriculum Progress (Part 1):** The trainee does not make expected progress against Vantage curriculum targets, such as planning, subject knowledge, or pedagogy.
- **Professional Conduct (Part 2):** The trainee fails to demonstrate high standards of personal and professional conduct, including lack of punctuality or failing to submit required documentation on time.
- **Attendance Violations:** A Support Plan is triggered by a **failure to report absence** (breaching the 9:00 AM notification requirement) or when an **Attendance Review Meeting** identifies patterns of poor attendance that jeopardize course completion.

- **Late Submissions:** Any late submission of evidence to SharePoint or Mosaic that has not been pre-authorized by the Leadership Team under "exceptional circumstances".

### 3. The Support Plan Procedure

The following five-step process, moderated by the Vantage Leadership Team to ensure fairness and consistency, must be followed:

Step	Action	Detail
<b>1: Initiation</b>	The Programme Lead outlines concerns with the trainee and mentor.	<b>Mitigation:</b> The Lead must listen respectfully to trainee perceptions and any disclosed mitigating factors or medical evidence. A Support Plan is set for <b>2 weeks</b> with a <b>maximum of three targets</b> and clear success criteria.
<b>2: First Review</b>	Formal review after 2 weeks.	If sufficient progress is made, the plan is signed off. If progress is insufficient, move to Step 3.
<b>3: Extension</b>	Moderate evidence and decide whether to extend or modify targets.	An additional <b>2-week period</b> is set. If, after this extension (or a potential second extension in limited cases), targets are not met, move to Step 4.
<b>4: Termination</b>	Immediate termination of the placement.	The trainee is requested to withdraw or is deregistered. The trainee is formally informed of their <b>right of appeal</b> .
<b>5: Finality</b>	Completion of Appeals process.	Once any appeal is concluded, a formal 'Completion of Procedures' letter is issued.

### 4. Attendance and Conduct Requirements

Trainees must adhere to the **VNHTT Attendance Policy**, which requires regular and punctual attendance as a professional standard. Failure to comply with reporting procedures or missing payments for tuition fees may be defined as misconduct. In cases where health problems affect attendance, VNHTT may refer the trainee for an **Occupational Health assessment** to establish if additional support or a staged return is required before or during a Support Plan.

## 5. Rights of Appeal

In accordance with the **VNHTT Appeals Policy**, trainees have the right to request a change to assessment decisions or Support Plan outcomes under the following grounds:

- **Procedural Irregularity:** Evidence that VNHTT did not comply with its own policies.
- **Bias or Prejudice:** Evidence of unfair treatment in the assessment or support process.
- **New Mitigating Circumstances:** Significant factors that were not previously disclosed for a good reason.

**Representation:** During any formal appeal meeting or internal review hearing, trainees are entitled to be accompanied by a colleague, friend, family member, or **union representative**.

## 6. Safeguarding and Gross Misconduct Exceptions

Standard Support Plan steps may be bypassed for incidents involving safeguarding or gross misconduct.

- **Safeguarding:** A trainee may be suspended immediately from a placement following a report of a safeguarding incident, pending LADO recommendations.
- **Gross Misconduct:** Behaviour such as dishonesty, indecency, harassment, bullying, or violence will be dealt with under the VNHTT Disciplinary Policy and may lead to immediate disciplinary action and/or potential exclusion from the course.

## 7. Final External Review

Once all internal stages of the Appeals Policy (Clarification, Formal Appeal, and Internal Review) have been exhausted, a trainee may request a formal review by the **Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA)** within 12 months of the final decision.

## Support Plan



### Trainee's name:

**A Support Plan is intended to be a developmental and supportive process.**

The precise circumstances when a Support Plan is required vary but common scenarios are when:

- a trainee does not make the expected progress against Vantage curriculum targets; for example, there may be concerns about the trainee's planning, classroom practice, subject knowledge, behaviour management, or assessment.
- a trainee fails to demonstrate the required high standards of personal and professional conduct
- a trainee's absence is unexplained or causing concern
- a trainee is failing to submit required assignments or documentation on time or to the required standard
- there is another relevant cause for concern

The Support Plan will outline the concern(s) and set targets, identify training and actions and agree review points. It will result in increased school and centre-based support and monitoring.

#### Targets

- Targets for improvement must be explicitly linked to areas of concern identified which are preventing the trainee from making adequate progress against Vantage curriculum targets. There must be clear alignment between the identified issues and the targets set.
- Targets should be set with agreed actions for both the trainee and all those working with him/her in the training programme.
- The setting and revision of targets must be based on the review of the full range of evidence.

<b>Step 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the earliest opportunity, the Vantage programme lead <b>outlines the concerns</b> with the trainee and their mentor and clearly states that there is a cause for concern, ensuring that he/she listens respectfully to the trainee to gain a full understanding of his/her perceptions and any mitigation factors disclosed. Where medical evidence is cited, then a copy of this should be sought, obtained and kept in the trainee’s file.</li> <li>• A Support Plan is set up with a review period of <b>2 weeks</b></li> <li>• There should be a <b>maximum of three targets</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Clear action steps</b> to support improvement with success criteria should be included.</li> <li>• The Vantage programme lead meets with the trainee and mentor to discuss the targets and actions needed and provides the trainee with a copy of the plan.</li> <li>• Other relevant senior colleagues in the school (e.g. Headteacher, ITT coordinator) are informed, consulted as required, and kept updated during this process.</li> <li>• All observations and mentor meetings include a strong focus on the Support Plan targets during this timeframe.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After 2 weeks, there is a <b>review</b> of the Support Plan to assess the trainee’s progress against the targets using the full range of evidence available.</li> <li>• If sufficient progress has been made by the trainee, the Support Plan is signed off and normal training routines continue.</li> <li>• If insufficient progress has been made, proceed to Step 3.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Vantage Programme Lead moderates the evidence with the mentor to decide whether there is a need to <b>extend the Support Plan</b> and / or modify the targets and / or provide additional support.</li> <li>• If so, an extended period of <b>two weeks</b> is set for the trainee to continue to focus on their Support Plan targets.</li> <li>• All observations and mentor meetings continue to include a strong focus on the Support Plan targets during this timeframe.</li> <li>• After 2 weeks the trainee’s progress is reviewed again (return to Step 2).</li> <li>• In certain cases, Steps 2 and 3 may need to be repeated for a third time, if limited progress is seen, but insufficient for the Support Plan to be signed off.</li> <li>• If, after this, none of the targets have been met and no progress has been made, proceed to Step 4.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The placement is terminated immediately subject to partnership protocols for the different training routes.</li> <li>• The trainee meets with the Vantage Programme Lead and the appropriate record for a failed Support Plan is completed.</li> <li>• The trainee is requested to withdraw from the programme, or if they determine not to do so, are deregistered.</li> <li>• The trainee is informed of his/her right of appeal and the processes for this.</li> <li>• An exit interview record is completed if the trainee declines the right of appeal.</li> <li>• A de-brief meeting takes place with the relevant school personnel, leading to a report of arising issues and actions.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5</b>	<p>Once any Appeals process is complete, the trainee will be sent a formal ‘Completion of Procedures’ letter.</p>

## Support Plan



- Trainee name:
- Placement school:
- Date:
- Mentor:
- Vantage lead completing this form:

### Step 1: Outline of the concerns

- Agree targets, which are focussed explicitly on areas for improvement with an initial timescale of two weeks. Ensure targets are SMART.
- Identify and record actions needed by all involved (including trainee, mentor, ITT-co-ordinator, Professional Tutor / Vantage lead) and identify success criteria to be used at the review point and the evidence expected
- Set a maximum of three targets

Step 2				
Target	Actions (for both trainee and those working with trainee, include dates where needed)	Success criteria	Progress made / Evidence seen	Sufficient progress? Y/N


**Step 3 (if required)**

<b>Target</b>	<b>Actions (for both trainee and those working with trainee, include dates where needed)</b>	<b>Success criteria</b>	<b>Progress made / Evidence seen</b>	<b>Sufficient progress? Y/N</b>