



Early Career Teachers Policy

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Statement of Intent

Melrose Education recognises that the appointment and successful induction of an early career teacher (ECT) benefits the ECT, the school and the learners. The school is committed to providing a high-quality, supportive, and fair statutory induction that enables each ECT to consolidate their initial teacher training, develop confidence and expertise, and demonstrate sustained performance against the Teachers' Standards.

Although independent schools are not required to offer statutory induction, Melrose Education has chosen to offer it. Where an ECT is appointed to a post in which statutory induction will be served, the school will comply with the Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended, and will have regard to the current Department for Education statutory guidance.

The school will not delay the start of statutory induction for a routine probationary or supervised-teaching period. Once an ECT is registered with an appropriate body and begins teaching in a suitable induction post, induction will start from the first day on which they teach in that post. Probation and statutory induction may operate concurrently but are separate processes.

Aims

- Provide every ECT with a personalised, structured programme of training, mentoring, support, monitoring, and assessment.
- Ensure that statutory induction is fair, rigorous, supportive, and proportionate.
- Enable the ECT to develop practice appropriate to the age range, subjects and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of the learners they teach.
- Assess the ECT only against the Teachers' Standards, taking account of their work context.
- Identify concerns early and provide additional support before a final assessment decision is made.
- Avoid unnecessary workload by drawing on normal teaching and working documents rather than creating an additional evidence portfolio.
- Ensure that safeguarding, safer recruitment, equality, reasonable adjustments, and data-protection requirements are met throughout induction.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002, including sections 135A, 135B and 141C(1)(b).
- Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended.
- Department for Education: Induction for early career teachers (England), statutory guidance, updated June 2026.
- Department for Education: Appropriate bodies guidance - induction and the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF), updated June 2026.
- Department for Education: Early Career Teacher Entitlement and related operational guidance.
- Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF), in force for new ECT cohorts from 1 September 2025.
- Teachers' Standards, Department for Education.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and Independent School Standards guidance, updated April 2026.
- Equality Act 2010.
- UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following:

- Safer Recruitment Policy.
- Supervision Documentation – Teaching Staff.
- Employee Handbook and associated employment policies.
- GDPR Compliant Records Management Policy.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Curriculum Policy.
- Roles and responsibilities documentation.

Definitions

- **Early career teacher (ECT):** a teacher who has qualified teacher status (QTS) and is serving all or part of a statutory induction period.
- **Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE):** the two-year package of training, mentoring, timetable reduction, progress reviews, and formal assessments that supports an ECT during statutory induction.
- **ITTECF:** the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework. It sets the content for the ECT's training and support. It is not an assessment tool.
- **Appropriate body:** an organisation authorised to quality assure statutory induction and make the final decision on whether an ECT has satisfactorily completed induction.
- **Induction tutor:** the person responsible for coordinating induction, monitoring progress and making fair assessment judgements.
- **Mentor:** the person who provides regular structured developmental support and feedback. The mentor is not normally responsible for formal assessment.
- **Principal:** for this policy, includes a Principal, Executive Principal or Head of School who has delegated responsibility to act as the headteacher/principal for statutory induction.
- **Directors:** the proprietor's representatives responsible for oversight and assurance.

Transitional Arrangements

ECTs and mentors who began ECF-based training before 1 September 2025 will normally continue with their existing course and materials until 31 August 2027. If they have not completed the training by that date, the school will work with the training provider and appropriate body to move them to ITTECF-based training from 1 September 2027. ECTs beginning induction on or after 1 September 2025 will receive an ITTECF-based programme under the ECTE.

Appropriate Body and Training Route

Before induction begins, the Principal will appoint an appropriate body and obtain its written agreement to act. The school may use its local teaching school hub or the Independent Schools Teacher Induction Panel where the school is eligible to use that service. Local authorities do not act as appropriate bodies for new registrations.

The school will normally commission a provider-led ITTECF programme on a self-funded basis. Where the school chooses a school-led programme, it will ensure that the programme covers the ITTECF in full and will provide the appropriate body with the information required to check fidelity. Registration for training does not replace registration for statutory induction; both processes will be completed where applicable.

The appropriate body and training provider may make charges. Any charges and service expectations will be agreed in advance and recorded.

Eligibility and Pre-Employment Checks

Before an ECT starts induction, the Principal will:

- Complete all safer-recruitment checks required by Keeping Children Safe in Education and Part 4 of the Independent School Standards, recording the required information on the single central record.

- Verify through the Department for Education Check a teacher's record service that the teacher holds QTS and check any prohibitions, sanctions, restrictions, and induction status.
- Establish whether the teacher is required to serve induction, is exempt, has already completed or failed induction, or has completed part of an induction period elsewhere.
- Obtain previous progress reviews, formal assessments, and any interim assessment where part of induction has already been served.
- Confirm that the post is suitable for statutory induction and that the school has sufficient capacity to provide the required support.
- Register the ECT with the appropriate body before induction begins.

There is no time limit for starting statutory induction after QTS. The former numeracy skills test requirement for teachers who gained QTS between 1 May 2000 and 30 April 2001 no longer applies.

Suitable Induction Post

The Principal and appropriate body must agree that the post is suitable. A suitable post will:

- Have a Principal who can make a recommendation about the ECT's performance against the Teachers' Standards.
- Have prior agreement with an appropriate body to quality assure induction.
- Provide an ITTECF-based programme of training and support.
- Provide sufficient experience of planning, teaching whole classes, assessment, and other normal teaching responsibilities to enable fair assessment against the Teachers' Standards.
- Include a trained induction tutor and a designated mentor, both normally holding QTS and having sufficient knowledge, skills, and protected time.
- Provide the required reduced timetable in addition to PPA time.
- Not make unreasonable demands or normally require teaching outside the age range or subjects for which the ECT was employed.
- Not routinely expose the ECT to unreasonably demanding behaviour or discipline challenges without appropriate preparation, staffing, and support.
- Provide regular teaching of the same classes and access to appropriate resources, policies, systems, and specialist advice.
- Make reasonable adjustments for an ECT who is disabled or otherwise protected by the Equality Act 2010.

The Directors and Principal will ensure that the school continues to have the leadership, staffing, safeguarding, and organisational capacity required to support each ECT. If circumstances arise that may compromise the quality or fairness of induction, the appropriate body will be informed immediately and alternative arrangements considered.

Start Date and Minimum Period

The ECT must be registered with an appropriate body before induction starts. The induction start date will be agreed by the appropriate body, Principal and ECT and should be the first day on which the ECT teaches in the suitable induction post. It is not determined by the start date of the ITTECF training programme and cannot be backdated.

The minimum period of continuous employment that can count towards induction is one term or equivalent, for both full-time and part-time ECTs. This applies to permanent and long-term supply posts. Once the minimum period has been served, any subsequent continuous period in that employment may be recorded accurately, including partial terms.

A short-term supply placement of less than one term cannot count towards statutory induction. If a short-term contract is extended so that it will continue for at least one term, induction arrangements must be put in place immediately; the start cannot be backdated.

Length of Induction and Reduced Timetable

Full-time ECTs will normally serve the equivalent of two standard school years, usually six terms. Part-time ECTs will normally serve the full-time equivalent of two school years. The Principal and appropriate body will determine a fair expected end date that reflects the ECT's working pattern.

In exceptional circumstances the appropriate body may agree a reduced induction period, including where the ECT has significant prior experience. A reduction will not normally be less than one term, must be agreed with the ECT and must still allow sufficient evidence for a fair final assessment. The appropriate body may also consider a reduction for a part-time ECT who has served induction over at least two school years and has demonstrated that the Teachers' Standards are met.

The reduced teaching timetable will be calculated against teachers on the main pay range and will be:

- Year 1, terms 1 to 3 or part-time equivalent: no more than 90% of the normal teaching timetable.
- Year 2, terms 4 to 6 or part-time equivalent: no more than 95% of the normal teaching timetable.

This reduction is additional to the planning, preparation, and assessment time available to other teachers. It will be protected and used for ITECF training, mentoring, observing experienced colleagues, professional development, reflection, and other agreed induction activities. It will not be routinely used for cover or additional operational duties.

SEND and Specialist-School Induction

The ECT's induction programme will be adapted to the school's specialist context and the needs of the learners taught. It will include, as relevant:

- Adaptive teaching and meeting the needs identified in EHC plans.
- Autism, communication needs, social, emotional, and mental health needs, moderate or severe learning difficulties, physical disabilities and other needs represented in the cohort.
- Use of augmentative and alternative communication, visual supports, and accessible teaching approaches.
- Positive behaviour support, de-escalation, trauma-informed practice, and the school's restrictive-intervention procedures.
- Safeguarding vulnerabilities of learners with SEND, including communication barriers and risks of child-on-child abuse, exploitation, and online harm.
- Medical, sensory, personal-care and intimate-care arrangements where relevant to the role.
- Working with families, local authorities, therapists, and other professionals.
- Assessment, accreditation, preparation for adulthood and careers pathways appropriate to learners' needs.

The mentor and induction tutor will ensure that phase-, subject- and SEND-specific support is available. The school will also consider and implement reasonable adjustments needed by the ECT.

Safeguarding and Professional Conduct

Before working unsupervised with learners, the ECT will complete the school's induction and safeguarding requirements. They will receive and understand the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Behaviour Policy, Restrictive Interventions Policy, Online Safety Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and arrangements for reporting allegations and low-level concerns.

All ECTs must read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and complete the school's required safeguarding, Prevent, online safety, filtering and monitoring, health and

safety, and role-specific training. The ECT will know the identity and contact arrangements of the DSPL and deputies and how to report concerns without delay.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Directors / Proprietor

- Ensure that the school has the capacity and resources to offer statutory induction, including self-funding where DfE funding is unavailable.
- Assure themselves that the Principal is fulfilling the school's statutory and policy responsibilities.
- Receive periodic, anonymised reports on induction arrangements, capacity, compliance, and emerging risks.
- Ensure that concerns raised by an ECT can be considered fairly through the appropriate internal procedure.

The Principal

- Verify eligibility, QTS and safer-recruitment requirements and register the ECT with an appropriate body before induction begins.
- Agree the start date, expected end date, training route and suitable post arrangements with the ECT and appropriate body.
- Appoint a suitably trained induction tutor and mentor and ensure they have adequate protected time.
- Ensure a personalised ITTECF-based induction programme, reduced timetable and appropriate specialist-school support are in place.
- Ensure progress reviews, formal assessments, observations, feedback, and records are completed accurately and on time.
- Make the final school recommendation to the appropriate body on satisfactory completion, extension, or failure.
- Act early where progress is unsatisfactory and notify the appropriate body where necessary.
- Notify the appropriate body when absences in an induction year total 30 days or more, when the ECT leaves, or when circumstances materially change.
- Provide an interim assessment when required and participate in the appropriate body's quality-assurance activity.
- Periodically report induction arrangements to the Directors.

The Induction Tutor

- Co-ordinate the induction programme and maintain regular contact with the ECT, mentor and Principal.
- Set and review appropriate objectives, taking account of the Teachers' Standards, the ECT's starting points and the school context.
- Arrange regular observation of the ECT's teaching and ensure prompt, constructive written feedback.
- Conduct progress reviews in terms where no formal assessment takes place.
- Conduct or coordinate the two formal assessments and ensure the ECT can comment on each report.
- Use normal working evidence and avoid requiring an additional evidence portfolio.
- Identify concerns early, coordinate additional support and keep the appropriate body informed.
- Explain how the ECT can raise concerns internally and with the appropriate body.

The Mentor

- Meet the ECT regularly for structured, developmental sessions during contracted time.
- Provide targeted feedback and phase-, subject- and SEND-specific support.
- Support engagement with ITTECF training and help the ECT apply learning in practice.
- Raise concerns promptly with the induction tutor while maintaining a supportive role.
- Keep mentoring distinct from formal assessment unless exceptional arrangements have been agreed and the two roles are clearly separated.

The ECT

- Provide evidence of QTS and relevant induction history and participate fully in agreed induction arrangements.
- Engage with training, mentoring, observations, progress reviews, and formal assessments.
- Use reduced timetable time for agreed induction activities.
- Retain copies of assessment reports and notify the school of relevant changes or absences.
- Raise concerns promptly with the induction tutor, Principal or appropriate body named contact.
- Meet safeguarding, conduct, attendance, and professional expectations applicable to all staff.

The Appropriate Body

The appropriate body independently quality assures statutory induction. Its responsibilities include checking eligibility and QTS, agreeing that the post and programme are suitable, monitoring the return of progress reviews and assessments, providing a named contact for concerns, checking the reduced timetable and ITTECF-based programme, supporting the school where concerns arise, and making the final decision on satisfactory completion, extension, or failure. The appropriate body records induction outcomes with the Department for Education.

Mentoring, Observation and Professional Development

The mentor will normally be different from the induction tutor. Where one person holds both roles because of the size or circumstances of the school, the Principal will record the rationale, ensure the person understands the distinct responsibilities and keep developmental mentoring separate from assessment.

Mentor meetings will be regular, structured, and timetabled within contracted hours. The frequency may reduce as the ECT becomes more established, but support will remain sufficient to meet their needs. The school will ensure that mentors receive appropriate training and access to programme materials.

The ECT's teaching will be observed at regular intervals, normally at least termly and more frequently where useful or required. Observations will be proportionate, pre-arranged wherever practicable and followed promptly by constructive feedback and a brief written record. The ECT will also have opportunities to observe experienced colleagues and access relevant professional development.

Progress Reviews and Formal Assessments

The Teachers' Standards are the assessment criteria. The ITTECF is a training framework and will not be used as an assessment rubric or checklist.

A progress review will be conducted in every term in which there is no formal assessment. This applies to part-time ECTs regardless of working pattern. The review will record whether the ECT is on track, a brief summary of relevant evidence, agreed development objectives and any support required. The ECT will receive a copy, and the outcome will be shared with the Principal and appropriate body.

Two formal assessments will normally take place:

- In the final term of the first year of induction, or part-time equivalent.
- In the final term of the second year of induction, or part-time equivalent.

Formal assessments will draw on evidence arising naturally from the ECT's work and previous reviews. The ECT will not be required to create new evidence solely for assessment. The report will explain the judgement against the Teachers' Standards, be discussed with the ECT and allow the ECT to add comments. The final assessment report and Principal's recommendation will be sent to the appropriate body within 10 working days of the final assessment meeting.

There should be no unexpected formal assessment outcome. Concerns and the support needed to address them will be communicated as soon as they arise.

Unsatisfactory Progress, Capability and Conduct

Where an ECT is not making satisfactory progress, the induction tutor and Principal will act early. They will:

- Identify the specific areas of concern and the evidence supporting them.
- Explain the concern to the ECT and give them an opportunity to respond.
- Set clear, reasonable, and time-bound objectives linked to the Teachers' Standards.
- Provide additional support, coaching, observation, training, or specialist advice.
- Record the support plan and review it regularly.
- Alert and seek support from the appropriate body.
- Arrange a third-party observation where the ECT may be at risk of not completing induction satisfactorily.
- Explain the possible consequences if sufficient improvement is not made.

Statutory induction, probation, capability, disciplinary and safeguarding processes are separate. Probation does not determine whether induction has started or been completed. Serious capability concerns may be managed under the Staff Capability Policy while induction continues. Misconduct, safeguarding allegations, low-level concerns and complaints will be managed under the relevant school procedures and are not matters for the appropriate body to determine. The school will seek appropriate HR or legal advice where processes overlap.

Absence, Statutory Leave and Extensions

If an ECT's absences within either year of induction, or part-time equivalent, total 30 days or more, the relevant induction year must be extended by the aggregate number of days absent. The Principal will notify the appropriate body as soon as the threshold is reached. Additional absence occurring during an existing absence-related extension is not added to that same extension; the position will be managed in accordance with the current statutory guidance.

The automatic 30-day extension rule does not include the following statutory leave:

- Statutory maternity leave.
- Statutory paternity leave.
- Statutory adoption leave.
- Shared parental leave.
- Parental bereavement leave.
- Carer's leave.
- Neonatal care leave.

An ECT taking one of these forms of statutory leave may decide whether to extend or further extend induction to reflect the absence. Any request to extend for this purpose will be granted. Outstanding assessments will not be made until the ECT returns and has had the opportunity to decide. If the ECT chooses not to extend, their performance will still be assessed against the Teachers' Standards.

The appropriate body may also extend induction after the agreed period where there is insufficient evidence or where it would be unreasonable to expect satisfactory performance to have been demonstrated, including because of illness, disability, personal crisis, or shortcomings in the support provided.

ECTs Leaving, Transferring or Working in More Than One School

Where an ECT leaves after completing at least one term but before the next formal assessment, the induction tutor or Principal will normally complete an interim assessment before departure. The report will record progress, performance, the exact induction period completed, working pattern, absences and any concerns or support arrangements. It will be provided to the ECT and appropriate body.

Where induction is served in more than one school simultaneously, one Principal and one appropriate body will take the lead. Each contract must meet the minimum-period requirements, and the periods will be combined to calculate and record the induction served. The schools will cooperate to share evidence lawfully and avoid duplication.

Completion, Appropriate Body Decision and Appeals

The Principal will recommend to the appropriate body whether the ECT has satisfactorily completed induction, requires an extension or has failed to complete induction satisfactorily. The appropriate body makes the final decision after considering the recommendation, all available evidence, and any written representations from the ECT.

Where the decision is to extend or fail induction, the appropriate body will inform the ECT of the right and deadline to appeal to the Teaching Regulation Agency. The school will co-operate with the appeal process and preserve all relevant records.

Failure to complete statutory induction satisfactorily does not remove QTS but prevents the teacher from being employed as a teacher in a relevant school, including a maintained school, maintained nursery school, non-maintained special school, or pupil referral unit. As an independent school is not a relevant school for this purpose, the statutory ten-working-day dismissal requirement does not apply automatically. The school will decide whether continued employment is appropriate under its contractual, capability, conduct, safeguarding, and suitability procedures, following a fair process and taking appropriate HR or legal advice.

Short-Term Supply Teaching

The school will distinguish between an ECT who has not yet completed induction and an ECT who has failed induction. Short-term supply work of less than one term cannot count towards induction. The five-year time limit on short-term supply work applies to employment in relevant schools; work in an independent school is not subject to that particular restriction, although the school will still verify QTS, induction status, suitability, and all safer-recruitment requirements before appointment.

Records, Confidentiality and Data Protection

The school will keep accurate records of the induction start date, expected end date, working pattern, timetable reductions, training route, mentor and induction tutor, observations, progress reviews, assessments, absences, statutory leave, extensions, support plans, appropriate-body correspondence, and the outcome of induction.

Formal assessment reports and related induction documentation will be retained securely for at least six years, or longer where required by the school's records retention schedule, employment needs, or legal advice. The ECT will be advised to retain their own copies of assessment reports.

Information will be shared only where lawful and necessary, including with the ECT, Principal, induction tutor, appropriate body, training provider, Department for Education, Teaching Regulation Agency, HR advisers, and Directors where required for oversight or the resolution of a concern. Safeguarding information will be managed under safeguarding procedures and will not be withheld on grounds of induction confidentiality.

Concerns and Complaints

An ECT should raise concerns about the induction programme with the induction tutor in the first instance. If the matter is not resolved, they may approach the Principal and the named contact at the appropriate body. Employment grievances, whistleblowing concerns, discrimination, harassment, safeguarding concerns, or complaints will be addressed under the relevant school policy. Raising a genuine concern will not disadvantage the ECT in assessment.

Monitoring, Inspection Evidence and Review

The Principal will maintain an individual induction file for each ECT and will provide the appropriate body and inspectors with evidence of compliance where lawfully requested. The

Directors will receive periodic assurance that the school has sufficient capacity and that induction arrangements are operating effectively.

The following evidence will normally be retained:

- QTS and induction-status verification and safer recruitment records.
- Appropriate-body agreement and registration confirmation.
- Suitable post assessment and induction start/end dates.
- Training route and ITTECF coverage information.
- Timetable calculations showing 10% or 5% reduction in addition to PPA.
- Appointment and training records for the induction tutor and mentor.
- Mentor meeting, observation, and feedback records.
- Progress reviews, formal assessments, and interim assessments.
- Absence, leave, and extension records.
- Support plans, reasonable adjustments, and specialist SEND induction evidence.
- ECT comments, concerns, and appropriate-body correspondence.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, Department for Education systems or the school's status changes. The current statutory guidance will take precedence where there is any inconsistency.

Appendix 1: ECT Induction Compliance Checklist

Stage	Required evidence / action
Before appointment / start	Full safer-recruitment checks completed; QTS and induction status checked; previous records obtained; suitable post confirmed.
Before induction begins	Appropriate body appointed and ECT registered; training route arranged; mentor and induction tutor appointed; start date agreed.
Timetable	Year 1 maximum 90% teaching; Year 2 maximum 95%; both reductions additional to PPA and protected.
Programme	Personalised ITTECF-based training; specialist SEND induction; regular mentoring during contracted time.
Monitoring	Regular observations and feedback; termly progress reviews when no formal assessment; concerns addressed early.
Formal assessment	End of Year 1 and Year 2 or part-time equivalent; ECT comments invited; final report sent within 10 working days.
Absence / leave	30-day threshold monitored separately in each induction year; statutory leave options and neonatal care leave applied correctly.
Leaving / transfer	Interim assessment completed where required; exact induction served and absences recorded; records transferred securely.
Completion	Principal recommendation submitted; appropriate body decision recorded; appeal rights explained where applicable.
Oversight	Directors receive assurance; records retained; policy and individual arrangements reviewed annually.