



TEACHER AND MENTOR BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Standards of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Mentors

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1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Ember Learning Ltd provides online teaching and mentoring to students and mentees referred by commissioning bodies — which may be Local Authorities, Multi-Academy Trusts, private companies or individual schools — as a form of alternative provision. Our students and mentees are often vulnerable young people with complex needs, and the manner in which teachers and mentors conduct themselves has a direct impact on student and mentee welfare, educational outcomes, and the reputation of the organisation.

This Policy sets out the standards of professional conduct expected of all teachers and mentors when delivering sessions on behalf of Ember Learning. It applies to:

- all teachers and mentors engaged by Ember Learning Ltd under a Teacher and Mentor Agreement (EL-TMA-SE-003A or EL-TMA-E-003B)
- all teacher and mentor activity carried out via the approved session platform
- all communications with students, mentees, Commissioners, and Ember Learning staff in connection with teaching and mentoring services

This Policy should be read alongside the following documents, which together form the complete framework of expectations for teachers and mentors:

- Teacher Agreement (EL-TMA-SE-003A or EL-TMA-E-003B)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (EL-CPSP-001)
- Online Safety Policy (EL-OSP-001)
- Session Recording Policy (EL-SRP-002)
- Data Processing Agreement (EL-DPA-001)

2. CORE PRINCIPLES

Ember Learning is committed to delivering education that is safe, inclusive, and of high quality. All teachers and mentors are expected to uphold the following principles in every aspect of their work:

- The welfare of students and mentees is paramount. Teachers and mentors must prioritise student and mentee safety and wellbeing above all other considerations.
- Professional relationships with students must be appropriate, boundaried, and purposeful.
- Every student deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, and consistency, regardless of their behaviour, background, or ability.
- Teachers and mentors represent Ember Learning at all times when working in their professional capacity. Their conduct reflects directly on the organisation and its relationship with commissioning bodies.
- Transparency and honest communication with Ember Learning staff are non-negotiable. If in doubt, report it.

3. SESSION ENVIRONMENT AND PRESENTATION

3.1 Physical Environment

Teachers and mentors must ensure their working environment is appropriate for professional online delivery:

- Sessions must be conducted from a quiet, private location free from interruptions and background noise.
- The background visible on camera must be neutral, tidy, and professional. Virtual backgrounds are acceptable if they are neutral and non-distracting.
- Teachers and mentors must not conduct sessions from public spaces such as cafes, libraries, or open-plan offices unless expressly agreed with Ember Learning in writing.
- No third parties should be present or visible in the background during sessions.

3.2 Dress and Appearance

Teachers and mentors must dress professionally for all sessions. Smart casual dress is expected as a minimum. Clothing should be:

- Clean, appropriate, and professional in appearance
- Free from offensive logos, slogans, or imagery

Teachers and mentors should present themselves in a way that reflects well on Ember Learning and commands appropriate professional respect from students.

3.3 Camera and Microphone

- Teachers and mentors must have their camera on for all sessions unless a technical fault makes this impossible.
- Teachers and mentors must ensure their microphone audio is clear and free from excessive background noise before each session begins.
- If a technical issue arises during a session that cannot be resolved quickly, the teacher or mentor must notify Ember Learning as soon as practicable and log the session as affected.

4. CONDUCT DURING SESSIONS

4.1 Communication Standards

Teachers and mentors must communicate with students and mentees in a manner that is:

- Calm, clear, and professional
- Age-appropriate and accessible to the student's level
- Encouraging and supportive, even when a student is disengaged or struggling
- Free from sarcasm, dismissiveness, or language that could be perceived as belittling

Teachers and mentors must not raise their voice at a student or mentee, make negative comments about a student's abilities, or use language that could cause distress. If a teacher or mentor feels a session is not going well, they should de-escalate calmly and, if necessary, end the session in accordance with Section 6.

4.2 Punctuality and Preparation

- Teachers and mentors must log into the approved session platform and be ready to begin no later than ten minutes before each scheduled session. This additional time is recommended to allow for any technical issues to be identified and resolved before the student joins.
- Sessions must run for their full scheduled duration unless ended early in accordance with Section 6.
- Teachers and mentors must arrive to each session with a prepared lesson plan or mentoring plan and all necessary materials ready.
- Persistent lateness or inadequate preparation must be reported to Ember Learning by the teacher or mentor and will be addressed under Section 8.

4.3 Attendance and Absence

- teachers and mentors must notify Ember Learning as soon as possible, and no later than two hours before the scheduled session, if they are unable to attend.
- Repeated or unexplained absence is a serious matter and will be addressed under Section 8.
- Where a session cannot go ahead due to teacher or mentor absence, Ember Learning will notify the Commissioner promptly.

4.4 Use of the Session Platform and Session Materials

- Teachers and mentors must use only the approved session platform for delivering sessions, unless expressly agreed otherwise in writing by Ember Learning.
- Any resources shared with students via the platform must be appropriate, curriculum-aligned, and free from any offensive, political, or inappropriate content.
- Teachers and mentors must not instruct students or mentees to access external websites, apps, or resources that have not been pre-approved by Ember Learning.

4.5 Screen Capture, Student Absence from Screen, and 1:1 Sessions

- **NO SCREEN CAPTURE.** Teachers and mentors must not use the screenshot or screen capture function at any time while a student is present in the session. This applies regardless of the purpose. Any need to capture session content for safeguarding or quality assurance purposes must go through the DSL using the session recording.
- **STUDENT OR MENTEE ABSENT FROM SCREEN.** If a Student or Mentee leaves the screen during a session — including to use the toilet or leave the room — and does not return within a reasonable period, or if there is any cause for concern, the teacher or mentor should attempt to re-engage verbally. If the Student or Mentee cannot be reached, the teacher or mentor must notify the DSL. The primary safeguard in this scenario is the Ember Learning responsible adult recommendation: parents and carers are asked to be present or reachable so they are aware of where the student is. Ember Learning does not hold responsibility for what happens outside the session screen; responsibility is to act on any concern that comes to the teacher's attention and to have communicated supervision expectations to Commissioners in advance.
- **1:1 SESSIONS.** If only one Student or Mentee attends a session, the teacher or mentor must notify the DSL by/at the end of that session. The session may proceed. If 1:1 sessions become a recurring pattern for a particular Student or Mentee, the teacher or mentor must raise this with the DSL so the configuration can be reviewed.

5. PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

5.1 Contact with Students

- All communication with students and mentees must take place exclusively within the approved session platform, during scheduled sessions.
- Teachers and mentors must not contact students or mentees by any other means, including but not limited to: personal phone, text message, email, WhatsApp, social media, or any other platform.
- Teachers and mentors must not share their personal contact details (phone number, personal email, social media handles) with students.
- Teachers and mentors must not accept contact requests from students or mentees on social media, gaming platforms, or any other personal accounts.

5.2 Gifts and Favours

- Teachers and mentors must not offer, accept, or exchange gifts or favours with students or mentees.
- Teachers and mentors must not provide financial assistance to students, mentees, or their families.

5.3 Personal Information

- Teachers and mentors must not share personal information about themselves (home address, personal relationships, finances, health) with students.
- Teachers and mentors must not encourage students or mentees to share personal information beyond what is relevant to the relationship.

5.4 Physical Contact

Sessions are delivered online. There is no circumstance in which physical contact between a teacher or mentor and a student or mentee is appropriate or necessary. Teachers and mentors must not arrange to meet students or mentees in person without the prior written consent of Ember Learning and the relevant Commissioner.

6. MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOUR DURING SESSIONS

Ember Learning's approach to understanding and responding to student behaviour, including the graduated response to low-level disruption, concerning behaviour, and serious incidents, is set out in full in the Student Behaviour and Relationships Policy (EL-SBRP-001). Teachers and mentors must be familiar with that Policy and apply it during sessions.

6.1 Other Grounds for Ending a Session Early

A session may also be ended before its scheduled end time where a serious technical failure makes delivery impossible, or where a personal emergency arises that poses an immediate risk to the teacher's or mentor's own family or household. These are operational grounds, distinct from the behaviour-related grounds set out in the Student Behaviour and Relationships Policy (EL-SBRP-001). In either case, the teacher or mentor must inform the student or mentee calmly that the session is ending, notify Ember Learning immediately afterwards, and submit a written report explaining the reason for early termination.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA

- All information about students, their families, and their circumstances is strictly confidential.
- Teachers and mentors must not discuss student or mentee details with anyone other than Ember Learning staff, and only on a need-to-know basis.
- Teachers and mentors must not post on social media or discuss in any public forum information that could identify a student or mentee, a Commissioner, or any details of a session.
- Teachers must handle all personal data in accordance with the Data Processing Agreement (EL-DPA-001) and must not store student data on personal devices or in personal cloud storage.
- Any data breach or suspected breach (including loss of a device containing session notes) must be reported to Ember Learning immediately.

8. CONDUCT OUTSIDE SESSIONS

Although teachers are engaged, their conduct outside of sessions can affect their suitability to work with students, mentees, and young people on behalf of Ember Learning. Teachers and mentors must:

- Inform Ember Learning immediately if they are subject to any criminal investigation, arrest, charge, or conviction, including for driving offences

- Inform Ember Learning immediately if they are subject to any allegation of harm to a student, mentee, or vulnerable person, or any disciplinary or regulatory investigation in a role involving children
- Maintain a valid DBS certificate on the Update Service and allow Ember Learning to conduct status checks as required
- Not engage in activity on social media or in public that would bring Ember Learning into disrepute or undermine trust in the organisation's suitability to deliver services to children and adults at risk

9. REPORTING AND RECORDING

Accurate and timely reporting is a professional obligation. Teachers must:

- Complete a brief post-session report for every session, noting attendance, student or mentee engagement, and any behavioural or welfare concerns
- Report any behavioural or welfare concerns relating to students or mentees to Ember Learning promptly — never wait until the next scheduled session to raise a concern
- Report any breach or suspected breach of this Policy to Ember Learning without delay

All incident reports are confidential and held securely by Ember Learning. Reports may be shared with commissioning bodies and, where required by law, with statutory agencies.

10. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Ember Learning Ltd takes breaches of this Policy seriously. Where a teacher or mentor is found to have breached this Policy, the response will be proportionate to the nature and severity of the breach and may include:

- A formal discussion and requirement to complete additional training
- A formal written warning
- Suspension from sessions pending investigation
- Termination of the Teacher and Mentor Agreement
- Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where required by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Referral to statutory agencies, including the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), or adult social care (where the individual concerned is aged 18 or over, under the Care Act 2014 adult safeguarding referral route, which applies alongside or instead of the LADO procedure as appropriate), where the breach involves a safeguarding concern

Teachers who are subject to an allegation or investigation will be treated fairly and the process will be conducted with appropriate confidentiality. Ember Learning will follow its obligations under the Teacher and Mentor Agreement (EL-TMA-SE-003A or EL-TMA-E-003B) throughout any such process.

11. REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there is a significant change in legislation, guidance, or the operational context of Ember Learning. The responsibility for maintaining and reviewing this Policy sits with the Company Director.

Version history and review dates will be maintained as part of the document control record.

12. DECLARATION

All teachers and mentors are required to confirm that they have read, understood, and agree to comply with this Policy before commencing any teaching or mentoring sessions on behalf of Ember Learning. This confirmation forms part of the onboarding process and is recorded by Ember Learning.

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Policy Owner:	Jack Bradley, Director & Designated Safeguarding Lead
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