



Staff Handbook and Code of Conduct

2026-27

Approved by	Paula Tucker, Headteacher
Date	September 2026
Review	September 2027

Welcome to ReFocus

Our aim in producing this handbook is to provide staff with a practical, accessible overview of the main arrangements, expectations and employment procedures that apply while working at ReFocus.

ReFocus was founded to provide an alternative to mainstream education and to help young people develop the skills, confidence and qualifications they need for their next steps. Every member of staff contributes to that work through high standards of professional conduct, safeguarding, teamwork and care.

This handbook should be read alongside the policies and procedures referred to throughout it. Where a separate ReFocus policy contains more detailed requirements, that policy takes precedence for operational purposes.

Status of this handbook

Your contract of employment and written statement of particulars contain your contractual terms. Unless expressly stated otherwise, the policies and procedures in this handbook are non-contractual and may be amended by ReFocus following appropriate consultation and in line with current law. Statutory rights will always be applied in accordance with the legislation in force at the relevant time.

If you are unsure about any part of this handbook, please speak to your line manager.

Paula Tucker

Headteacher

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1. Joining ReFocus

1.1 About ReFocus

ReFocus provides alternative education designed to meet individual needs and support successful progression into further education, training and employment. Our approach is underpinned by the values expressed in our motto: Employable, Sociable, READY.

Our curriculum and provision may develop over time in response to pupils, commissioning arrangements and the needs of the school. Current information is available through the ReFocus website and school policies.

1.2 Your induction

All new staff will receive an induction appropriate to their role. The induction will normally cover safeguarding, health and safety, key policies, professional expectations, systems, site arrangements, role responsibilities and any mandatory training.

- Safeguarding and child protection, including the identity and role of the DSL and deputy DSLs.
- Staff Code of Conduct, safer working practice and low-level concerns.
- Online safety, acceptable use, filtering and monitoring expectations.
- Health and safety, fire, evacuation/invacuation and first-aid arrangements.
- Role-specific systems, routines and training.

Induction may continue across the first few months of employment and will be supported by the employee's line manager.

1.3 Statement of employment terms and conditions

Employees receive a written statement setting out the principal terms and conditions applying to their post. This includes the information required by current employment legislation, such as pay, hours, place of work, holiday, pension, notice, probation, benefits and training arrangements.

Where a contractual term changes, ReFocus will provide written confirmation in accordance with current legal requirements.

1.4 Probation

Unless an employee's contract states otherwise, new staff are normally subject to a six-month probationary period. An informal review will usually take place around three months and a formal review towards the end of the probationary period.

During probation, ReFocus will make expectations clear and provide appropriate support. Probation may be extended where this is reasonable and appropriate. Failure to meet the required standards of conduct, attendance or suitability may result in employment being terminated in accordance with the employee's contract and applicable law.

1.5 Pre-employment and ongoing checks

All appointments are subject to ReFocus safer recruitment arrangements and the requirements applying to independent schools. This includes the checks required by Keeping Children Safe in Education and the ReFocus Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Staff must inform ReFocus promptly of any matter that may affect their suitability to work with children, their right to work, professional status or ability to undertake their role. This includes relevant criminal charges, cautions or convictions, changes to professional restrictions and other matters that ReFocus is legally entitled to consider.

1.6 Changes to personal information

Staff must keep ReFocus informed of changes to information needed for employment administration, including name, address, contact details, bank details, emergency contact, relevant qualifications, driving status where driving is part of the role, and any other information reasonably required for employment or safeguarding purposes.

2. Attendance, hours and flexible working

2.1 Attendance and notification of absence

ReFocus values good attendance and recognises that employees should not attend work when they are genuinely unwell or where doing so would create a health or safety risk.

If you are unable to attend work because of sickness or injury, you must notify your line manager as early as possible and normally before your usual start time. Notification should be made personally unless this is not reasonably possible. You should keep your manager appropriately updated during any continuing absence.

Absence of more than seven calendar days will normally require a fit note or other evidence permitted by law. ReFocus may seek occupational health or other appropriate medical advice where this is reasonably required.

2.2 Hours of work and breaks

Your normal hours and working pattern are set out in your contract or written statement. Staff are entitled to rest breaks and other working-time protections in accordance with current law. Any agreed local arrangements will reflect the needs of the school and the employee's role.

Persistent lateness, unauthorised absence or failure to follow absence-reporting arrangements may be addressed through appropriate management or disciplinary processes.

2.3 Flexible working

All employees have a statutory right to request flexible working from the first day of employment. Requests will be considered reasonably, in accordance with the statutory procedure and current Acas guidance. Employees may make the number of statutory requests permitted by law in any 12-month period.

Flexible working is a right to request a change, not an automatic right to the arrangement requested. ReFocus will consider the employee's needs alongside the operational needs of the school and will consult with the employee before refusing a statutory request.

3. Professional standards and Code of Conduct

All staff are expected to maintain high standards of professional conduct. The welfare of pupils, professional integrity, safety and respectful working relationships must remain central to day-to-day practice.

3.1 Safeguarding and safer working

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff must comply with the ReFocus Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's safer working arrangements.

- Read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education and complete required safeguarding training and updates.
- Report safeguarding concerns about pupils promptly through the school's safeguarding system and to the DSL or deputy DSL as appropriate.
- Report concerns about adults, including low-level concerns, allegations and safeguarding practice, through the routes set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid conduct that could be misinterpreted or place a pupil, colleague or member of staff at risk.
- Do not promise confidentiality to a pupil where safeguarding information needs to be shared.

A serious breach of safeguarding duties or professional boundaries may be treated as gross misconduct and may also give rise to statutory or regulatory referrals.

3.2 Appearance and professional presentation

ReFocus does not seek to inhibit individual choice. Staff are expected to dress appropriately for their role, the activities they undertake and the professional school environment. Where ReFocus provides uniform or role-specific clothing, staff are expected to wear and care for it as directed.

3.3 Premises, visitors, contractors and volunteers

Unauthorised persons must not be brought onto ReFocus premises. Visitors, contractors and volunteers must be managed in accordance with ReFocus safeguarding, health and safety and safer recruitment arrangements. Staff must follow local sign-in, identification and supervision requirements.

3.4 Personal property and school property

Personal property brought onto ReFocus premises remains the responsibility of the owner unless loss or damage results from circumstances for which ReFocus is legally liable. School property must not be removed, loaned or used outside its intended purpose without appropriate authorisation.

3.5 Mobile phones and smart technology

Staff must model appropriate use of mobile phones and smart technology and comply with the ReFocus Mobile Phones and Smart Technology Policy. Personal devices must not be used in a way that undermines safeguarding, confidentiality, professional boundaries or the school's mobile phone-free environment for pupils.

Staff must not use personal devices to photograph, record or store information about pupils except where expressly authorised under school procedures.

3.6 Online safety, email, social media and Generative AI

School devices, systems, email and internet access must be used responsibly and in accordance with the ReFocus Online Safety Policy and Staff Acceptable Use Agreement.

- Do not install or use unauthorised software, apps or services on ReFocus systems.

- Do not upload confidential, personal or safeguarding information to unauthorised websites, Generative AI tools or online services.
- Do not use school systems to access, create or distribute illegal, harmful, pornographic, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate material.
- Do not represent yourself as speaking on behalf of ReFocus on social media unless authorised to do so.
- Maintain professional boundaries with pupils and families online and use approved school communication channels.

ReFocus may monitor use of its networks, systems and devices for safeguarding, security, compliance and operational purposes in accordance with law and school policy.

3.7 Confidentiality and information sharing

Staff have a duty to protect confidential information obtained through their work. Information should only be accessed, used, shared or retained where there is an appropriate lawful basis and where doing so is necessary for the person's role or for another legitimate school purpose.

Confidentiality must never be used as a reason not to share information needed to safeguard a child or another person. Safeguarding information must be handled in line with the ReFocus Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

3.8 Data protection

ReFocus will comply with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and other applicable data protection legislation. Staff must follow the ReFocus Data Protection Policy and report actual or suspected data breaches immediately through the school's reporting arrangements.

3.9 Conflicts of interest, gifts and hospitality

Staff must avoid situations where personal, financial or other interests conflict, or could reasonably be perceived to conflict, with their duties to ReFocus. Any actual or potential conflict should be declared to the line manager or Headteacher.

Gifts or hospitality must never influence professional judgement. Significant gifts, hospitality or benefits must not be accepted without appropriate approval and any required declaration.

3.10 Bribery and corruption

ReFocus does not tolerate bribery, corruption or improper inducements. Offering, requesting, giving or accepting a bribe may constitute gross misconduct and may also be a criminal offence.

3.11 Smoking, vaping, alcohol and drugs

Smoking and vaping are prohibited on ReFocus premises except where the school has expressly designated an area for staff use. Staff must not attend work impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances in a way that affects safety, judgement or professional performance. Possession, supply or misuse of unlawful drugs at work may be treated as gross misconduct.

3.12 Speaking up, safeguarding concerns and whistleblowing

Staff are expected to raise concerns about wrongdoing, unsafe practice or safeguarding. A personal complaint about an employee's own employment will normally be dealt with under the Grievance Procedure. A disclosure

made in the public interest may fall under the ReFocus Whistleblowing Policy. Safeguarding concerns about adults must be reported through the routes set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

No employee will be subjected to unlawful detriment for making a protected disclosure or for raising a safeguarding concern in good faith.

4. Equality, dignity, wellbeing and safety at work

4.1 Equality and reasonable adjustments

ReFocus is committed to equality of opportunity and will not unlawfully discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered for disabled employees and applicants in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Staff who believe an adjustment may assist them should discuss this with their line manager or the Headteacher.

4.2 Dignity at work

ReFocus is committed to a working environment in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Bullying, harassment, victimisation and sexual harassment are unacceptable whether they take place in person or online.

Harassment can arise from colleagues or from third parties encountered through work, including pupils, parents/carers, visitors, contractors, external professionals and members of the public.

4.3 Preventing sexual harassment and third-party harassment

ReFocus will take the steps required by law to prevent sexual harassment at work. From 30 October 2026 this includes taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and to protect workers from unlawful harassment by third parties.

- Assess foreseeable risks and take appropriate preventative action.
- Provide clear routes for reporting concerns and make sure staff know how to use them.
- Provide appropriate information and training.
- Respond promptly and proportionately to concerns, including concerns involving pupils or other third parties.
- Keep arrangements under review and take further action where patterns or recurring risks are identified.

Staff who experience or witness bullying or harassment should raise the matter with their line manager, another senior leader or through the Grievance or Whistleblowing procedures as appropriate. Where the matter involves safeguarding, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy must also be followed.

4.4 Wellbeing and workload

ReFocus is committed to supporting staff wellbeing and to an open culture in which staff can raise concerns about workload, mental health, safety or support. Available support may include line-management discussion, occupational health advice, reasonable adjustments and other appropriate wellbeing arrangements.

Wellbeing support does not replace normal management responsibilities, safeguarding duties or formal procedures where these are required.

4.5 Trade union membership

Employees are free to join, not join or participate in the activities of a trade union. Staff may seek support and representation from their trade union in accordance with their statutory rights and ReFocus procedures.

5. Pay, pension and expenses

5.1 Salary

Salary arrangements are set out in the employee's contract or written statement. Pay is normally made monthly by bank transfer. Lawful deductions, including tax, National Insurance and pension contributions where applicable, will be made through payroll.

5.2 Overtime and additional hours

Overtime or payment for additional hours only applies where this is provided for by the employee's terms or has been authorised in advance. Any applicable rates or time-off arrangements will be confirmed by ReFocus.

5.3 Business travel and expenses

Reasonable and necessary expenses incurred wholly for ReFocus business will be reimbursed in accordance with the school's current expenses arrangements. Receipts or other evidence may be required. Current mileage rates are set by ReFocus and may change from time to time.

5.4 Statutory Sick Pay

Eligible employees will receive Statutory Sick Pay in accordance with the law and statutory rates in force at the relevant time. Current legislation provides for SSP from the first qualifying day of sickness and no longer applies a Lower Earnings Limit as a condition of entitlement.

5.5 Occupational Sick Pay

ReFocus occupational sick pay is a ReFocus employment benefit and is subject to the employee complying with absence-reporting and certification requirements. Unless the employee's contract provides otherwise, the current scheme is:

Continuous service at first day of absence	Full pay	Thereafter
Probationary period	Discretionary	Statutory Sick Pay where entitled
3 months to under 1 year	1 week	Statutory Sick Pay thereafter, within statutory limits
Year 2	2 weeks	Statutory Sick Pay thereafter, within statutory limits
Year 3	4 weeks	Statutory Sick Pay thereafter, within statutory limits

Continuous service at first day of absence	Full pay	Thereafter
Year 4	8 weeks	Statutory Sick Pay thereafter, within statutory limits
Year 5 and above	12 weeks	Statutory Sick Pay thereafter, within statutory limits

Previous sickness absence may be taken into account when determining occupational sick pay entitlement. ReFocus may withhold or withdraw occupational sick pay where there is reasonable evidence of abuse of the scheme or failure to comply with reporting or certification requirements, subject to contract and law.

5.6 Pension

Eligible staff will be enrolled into the pension arrangement applicable to their employment in accordance with automatic-enrolment legislation and ReFocus arrangements. Staff may exercise any statutory right to opt out. ReFocus cannot provide individual financial advice.

6. Leave and family-friendly rights

Keeping this section current

Statutory eligibility tests, notice requirements, payment rates and earnings thresholds can change. ReFocus will apply the law in force at the relevant time. The summaries below explain the main rights but do not replace current statutory rules or individual advice.

6.1 Annual leave

Individual holiday entitlement and arrangements are set out in the employee's contract or written statement and are administered in accordance with current Working Time legislation. For employees working on school-year or part-year arrangements, leave and holiday pay will be calculated in accordance with the contractual and statutory rules applying to that working pattern.

6.2 Maternity leave and pay

Pregnant employees are entitled to up to 52 weeks of maternity leave, consisting of 26 weeks of Ordinary Maternity Leave and 26 weeks of Additional Maternity Leave, regardless of length of service. The compulsory maternity leave period immediately following birth will be observed as required by law.

Eligible employees may receive Statutory Maternity Pay for up to 39 weeks. Eligibility and payment will be determined in accordance with the statutory requirements and rates in force at the relevant time. Employees who are not eligible for SMP may be entitled to Maternity Allowance from the state.

Contractual terms and benefits other than remuneration continue during statutory maternity leave in accordance with law. Annual leave continues to accrue. ReFocus will carry out any required pregnancy or new-parent health and safety assessment and consider appropriate adjustments where necessary.

Employees may agree to work up to 10 Keeping in Touch days without bringing maternity leave to an end. Return-to-work rights and redundancy protection will be applied in accordance with current legislation.

6.3 Adoption leave and pay

Eligible employees may be entitled to statutory adoption leave and pay in accordance with current legislation. ReFocus will provide individual confirmation of entitlement, evidence and notice requirements when an employee is matched with a child or otherwise becomes eligible under the statutory scheme.

6.4 Paternity leave and pay

Statutory Paternity Leave is a day-one right for eligible employees. Current law allows qualifying leave to be taken in the period and pattern permitted by legislation. Eligibility for Statutory Paternity Pay is subject to separate statutory service and earnings requirements.

Employees should notify ReFocus as soon as reasonably possible and comply with the statutory notice requirements in force at the time.

6.5 Shared Parental Leave and Pay

Eligible parents and adopters may share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of statutory pay, subject to the statutory eligibility and notice requirements. Shared Parental Leave may be taken in permitted continuous or discontinuous blocks by agreement and must be used within the statutory period following birth or placement.

6.6 Unpaid Parental Leave

Unpaid Parental Leave is a day-one statutory right for eligible employees with responsibility for a child. Current legislation provides an overall entitlement of up to 18 weeks per child, subject to statutory limits on when and how leave may be taken. ReFocus will apply the current notice and postponement rules.

6.7 Neonatal Care Leave and Pay

Eligible parents of babies receiving qualifying neonatal care may take up to 12 weeks of statutory Neonatal Care Leave in addition to other family leave. Neonatal Care Leave is a day-one right where the statutory conditions are met. Statutory Neonatal Care Pay has separate eligibility requirements and will be paid at the prevailing statutory rate where applicable.

6.8 Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay

An eligible employee who loses a child under the age specified by law, or experiences a qualifying stillbirth, is entitled to statutory Parental Bereavement Leave from the first day of employment. Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay has separate service and earnings requirements. ReFocus will support employees sensitively and will apply the leave flexibly in accordance with current legislation.

6.9 Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

Eligible bereaved fathers or partners may have a day-one statutory right to Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave where the mother, main adopter or intended parent dies during the child's first year. The amount and timing of leave will be determined in accordance with the law in force at the time.

6.10 Carer's Leave

Employees have a day-one statutory right to take up to one working week of unpaid Carer's Leave in a 12-month period to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need. Leave may be taken flexibly in accordance with current statutory rules.

6.11 Time off for dependants

Employees are entitled to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with qualifying unforeseen emergencies involving a dependant, for example illness, injury, breakdown of care arrangements or certain bereavement-related matters. Staff should notify their line manager as soon as reasonably possible.

6.12 Other leave

Other statutory or contractual leave will be provided where applicable. Employees should speak to their line manager where they need leave for a reason not covered above so that the appropriate entitlement or discretionary arrangement can be considered.

7. Health, safety and emergency arrangements

7.1 General responsibilities

ReFocus will, so far as reasonably practicable, protect the health, safety and welfare of employees and others affected by its activities. Employees must take reasonable care of themselves and others, follow risk assessments and safety arrangements, and report hazards, unsafe practice, accidents and near misses.

7.2 Accidents and RIDDOR

All work-related accidents, injuries and near misses must be reported promptly through the ReFocus reporting arrangements. Certain incidents must be reported to the relevant enforcing authority under RIDDOR. ReFocus will make any required statutory report in accordance with current HSE requirements, including the rules relating to specified injuries and over-seven-day incapacity.

7.3 First aid

ReFocus will provide appropriate first-aid arrangements. Staff should familiarise themselves with the first-aid provision at the site where they are working and follow school procedures following an illness or injury.

7.4 Fire, evacuation, invacuation and lockdown

Staff must familiarise themselves with the fire, evacuation, invacuation/lockdown and other emergency arrangements for each ReFocus site at which they work. Site-specific instructions, alarms, assembly or safe areas and staff responsibilities may differ between premises and must be followed.

7.5 Personal and lone-working safety

Staff should avoid unnecessary lone working and must follow any risk assessment or site procedure applying to lone working, home visits, off-site work or meetings with pupils. Staff should ensure colleagues know where they are working when this is required by local arrangements.

7.6 Medical conditions and allergies

Staff must follow the ReFocus Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Allergy Safety arrangements. Any health or medical risk affecting an employee's own work should be raised with the line manager so that appropriate risk assessment or reasonable adjustments can be considered.

8. Training, development and performance management

ReFocus is committed to high-quality induction, ongoing professional learning and development. Training will reflect statutory requirements, safeguarding priorities, role needs and whole-school development priorities.

Professional development may be identified through line management, performance management, school priorities or individual requests. Where external training has a cost or operational impact, prior approval will normally be required.

Capability

Capability and formal performance concerns are not dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure in this handbook. Where formal capability action is required, it will be managed under the separate ReFocus capability arrangements in force at the time.

9. Leaving ReFocus

9.1 Notice

The notice required from ReFocus and from the employee is set out in the employee's contract or written statement. Unless the contract states otherwise, current ReFocus arrangements are normally two weeks during probation, one month following successful completion of probation, and a half-term notice period after one school year of employment.

Summary dismissal without notice may occur in cases of gross misconduct following a fair disciplinary process.

9.2 Working notice and payment in lieu

ReFocus may require an employee to work their notice, undertake appropriate alternative duties, take outstanding leave where lawful and agreed, or receive payment in lieu of notice where the contract permits.

9.3 Return of property and confidentiality

On leaving ReFocus, employees must return school property, records, devices, keys, identification, documents and any other materials belonging to ReFocus. Confidentiality and data-protection obligations continue after employment ends where applicable.

9.4 Final pay and deductions

Final pay will include sums properly due and any deductions lawfully authorised by contract or legislation. ReFocus will not withhold earned wages except where there is a lawful basis to do so.

9.5 Retirement

ReFocus does not operate a compulsory retirement age. Employees are encouraged to discuss future plans with their line manager where they wish to do so, so that appropriate workforce and pension arrangements can be considered.

10. ReFocus Disciplinary Procedure

10.1 Purpose and scope

The purpose of this procedure is to help employees achieve and maintain acceptable standards of conduct while ensuring concerns are addressed fairly and consistently. It is intended to comply with the Acas Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

This procedure deals with conduct, not capability. Performance or capability concerns are managed separately.

10.2 Informal action

Minor concerns should normally be addressed promptly through informal management where this is appropriate. The employee should be told what the concern is, what standard is expected, what improvement is required and when the matter will be reviewed. Informal action is not a formal disciplinary sanction.

10.3 Safeguarding allegations and low-level concerns

Where a concern involves safeguarding, an allegation against an adult, a low-level concern or possible unsuitability to work with children, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy must be followed.

Safeguarding duties and external referral requirements take precedence over the ordinary sequencing of this procedure where necessary.

10.4 Suspension

Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction and will not be used automatically. It may be considered where it is reasonably necessary to protect pupils or staff, preserve the integrity of an investigation, manage a serious risk or protect the interests of the school. Alternatives to suspension will be considered where appropriate.

Any suspension will normally be on full pay, confirmed in writing, kept under regular review and will last no longer than reasonably necessary. The Headteacher, Paula Tucker, or another person authorised by the proprietor where appropriate, may authorise suspension.

10.5 Investigation

Where formal action may be required, ReFocus will carry out a reasonable investigation. An investigating manager will gather relevant evidence, meet witnesses where appropriate and give the employee a reasonable opportunity to respond to the matters under investigation.

An investigatory meeting is not a disciplinary hearing and will not itself result in a disciplinary sanction. Where practicable, the person investigating the matter will not be the person who decides the disciplinary outcome.

There is no general statutory right to be accompanied at an investigatory meeting, although ReFocus may permit accompaniment where appropriate or as a reasonable adjustment.

10.6 Decision whether there is a case to answer

Following the investigation, ReFocus will decide whether no further action is required, whether informal management is appropriate, or whether there is a disciplinary case to answer. If a disciplinary hearing is required, the employee will receive reasonable written notice of the allegations, possible consequences and the evidence to be considered.

10.7 Formal disciplinary hearing

The employee will have an opportunity to respond to the allegations, ask relevant questions, present evidence and identify relevant witnesses. The hearing will be chaired by an appropriate manager who has not previously reached a decision on the matter wherever reasonably practicable.

The employee has the statutory right to be accompanied at a formal disciplinary hearing by a trade union representative or a workplace colleague. ReFocus may agree another companion where this is a reasonable adjustment or otherwise appropriate.

10.8 Non-attendance or ill health during the process

ReFocus will make reasonable efforts to enable an employee to participate. This may include rearranging a meeting, considering medical or occupational health advice, using remote arrangements where appropriate, accepting written representations or allowing a representative to assist. Where an employee remains unable or unwilling to attend and further delay would be unreasonable, ReFocus may proceed in their absence after considering all the circumstances.

10.9 Possible outcomes

Depending on the seriousness of the conduct and any current warnings, formal outcomes may include:

- No further action.
- A first written warning.
- A final written warning.
- Dismissal with notice.
- Summary dismissal without notice for gross misconduct.
- Another contractual sanction, such as transfer or demotion, only where ReFocus has the contractual right to impose it or the employee agrees.

A first written warning will normally remain active for up to 12 months and a final written warning for up to 18 months, unless the outcome letter states a different reasonable period because of the circumstances.

10.10 Examples of misconduct

Examples of misconduct may include persistent lateness, unauthorised absence, failure to follow reasonable instructions, minor breaches of school procedures, inappropriate use of school systems or property, and other conduct falling below expected professional standards. This list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

10.11 Examples of gross misconduct

Gross misconduct is conduct sufficiently serious to destroy or fundamentally undermine the employment relationship. Examples may include:

- Theft, fraud, deliberate falsification or serious dishonesty.
- Violence, serious threatening behaviour or serious insubordination.
- Serious breach of safeguarding duties, deliberate failure to report a serious safeguarding concern, or serious breach of professional boundaries with a pupil.
- Serious misuse or disclosure of confidential, personal or safeguarding information.
- Serious breach of online safety, acceptable use or data security requirements, including unauthorised recording or imagery involving pupils.

- Being unfit for duty because of alcohol or unlawful drugs, or possessing, supplying or misusing unlawful drugs at work.
- Serious discrimination, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation.
- Serious health and safety breach or serious negligence.
- Serious damage to ReFocus property or reputation.
- Conduct inside or outside work which demonstrates that the employee may be unsuitable to work with children or which seriously undermines trust and confidence.

The examples above do not automatically determine the outcome. ReFocus will consider the facts and circumstances of each case.

10.12 Written outcome

The outcome will be confirmed in writing as soon as reasonably practicable. Where a warning or dismissal is issued, the letter will explain the finding, sanction, duration of any warning, required improvement where relevant, consequences of further misconduct and the right of appeal.

10.13 Resignation during an investigation

Resignation or termination of employment will not necessarily bring an investigation to an end. ReFocus may complete an investigation where there is a safeguarding, regulatory, referral, record-keeping or other legitimate reason to do so. Any duty to refer information to the Disclosure and Barring Service, Teaching Regulation Agency, local authority designated officer or another body will be fulfilled where the relevant threshold is met.

10.14 Appeal

An employee may appeal a formal disciplinary outcome. The appeal should be made in writing within 10 working days of receiving the outcome and should explain the grounds of appeal. Grounds may include procedural unfairness, disproportionate sanction, factual error or relevant new evidence.

The appeal will be heard by a person or panel not previously involved in the decision wherever reasonably practicable. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague. The appeal decision will be final within the ReFocus procedure.

11. ReFocus Grievance Procedure

11.1 Purpose and scope

The grievance procedure enables employees to raise concerns, problems or complaints relating to their employment. ReFocus aims to resolve grievances promptly, fairly and consistently in accordance with the Acas Code of Practice.

This procedure is not normally used to challenge a disciplinary or capability decision where the relevant procedure provides its own appeal route. Collective disputes may be managed separately. Whistleblowing and safeguarding concerns should be raised under the appropriate ReFocus policy.

11.2 Informal resolution

Where appropriate, employees are encouraged to raise concerns informally with their line manager so that they can be addressed quickly. If the grievance concerns the line manager, it may be raised with the next

appropriate manager. Informal resolution is not required where the matter is sufficiently serious or where it would be inappropriate.

11.3 Formal grievance

A formal grievance should normally be made in writing and should explain the nature of the concern and the outcome sought. It should be submitted to the line manager or, where inappropriate, to the next appropriate manager. A grievance concerning the Headteacher should be submitted to the Chair of Governors or proprietor as appropriate.

ReFocus may carry out such investigation as is reasonable before or after the formal grievance meeting. The employee will be invited to a meeting without unreasonable delay and given an opportunity to explain the grievance and relevant evidence.

11.4 Right to be accompanied

Employees have the statutory right to be accompanied at a formal grievance meeting by a trade union representative or workplace colleague. ReFocus may agree another companion where this is a reasonable adjustment or otherwise appropriate.

11.5 Outcome

The decision will be confirmed in writing as soon as reasonably practicable. The outcome will explain whether the grievance is upheld in whole or in part, any action ReFocus intends to take and the employee's right of appeal.

11.6 Appeal

An employee may appeal the grievance outcome in writing within 10 working days of receiving the decision, explaining the grounds of appeal. The appeal will be heard by a person or panel not previously involved where reasonably practicable. The employee has the right to be accompanied. The appeal outcome will be final within the ReFocus procedure.

11.7 Mediation

Mediation may be considered at any stage where both parties agree and where it is appropriate to the issues. Formal timescales may be paused by agreement while mediation takes place.

Key linked ReFocus policies and procedures

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2026-27
- Staff Acceptable Use Agreement
- Online Safety Policy
- Mobile Phones and Smart Technology Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Allergy Safety Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

- Complaints Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safer Recruitment arrangements
- Performance Management arrangements
- Separate capability procedure/arrangements when adopted

Appendix 1 - Confirmation of Receipt of Handbook

Please complete and return this acknowledgement as directed by ReFocus.

Name	
Role	
Place of work	
Line manager	
Date received	

I confirm that I have received the ReFocus Staff Handbook and Code of Conduct 2026-27. I understand that I am responsible for reading the handbook and the policies and procedures referred to within it, and for seeking clarification where I am unsure of an expectation or requirement.

I understand that, unless expressly stated otherwise, this handbook and the procedures contained within it are non-contractual and may be amended by ReFocus in accordance with law and appropriate consultation.

Signed: _____

Date: _____