Placement Discontinuation Policy

Policy title	Placement Discontinuation Policy
Applies to	All In2science mentors (in-class mentoring and eMentoring), across all partner universities
Policy owner	Program Director
Related documents	Mentor Role Description In2science Code of Conduct Working with Children Check (WWCC) requirements
Version / date	v1 — 27/07/2026
Next review	1/07/2027

1. Purpose

This policy explains how and why an In2science mentor placement may be discontinued. It has two aims:

- To give mentors clarity and confidence about what is expected of them, what may lead to a placement ending, and the fair process they can expect if a concern arises.
- To give Program Coordinators a clear, consistent process to follow, so that difficult decisions are handled fairly, supportively, and in line with our obligations to keep students safe.

In2science is committed to high-quality, safe placements. Most concerns are minor and are resolved through a supportive conversation. This policy describes what happens in the smaller number of cases where a concern cannot be resolved, or where student or mentor's safety or wellbeing is at risk.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all In2science mentors across all partner universities. It covers the discontinuation of a current placement and, where relevant, whether a mentor remains eligible for future placements.

It works alongside the Mentor Role Description, which sets out the expectations and performance standards mentors agree to when they join the program. This policy does not replace any legal obligation, child safety requirement, or partner university policy.

3. Principles

Decisions under this policy are guided by the following principles:

- **Support first.** We assume good intent and start with a supportive conversation. Discontinuation is a last resort, not a first response.
- **Child safety is paramount.** Where a student's safety or wellbeing is at risk, that consideration comes before all others and may require immediate action.
- **Proportionate and consistent.** The response should match the nature and seriousness of the concern, and similar situations should be handled in similar ways across partner universities.
- **Fair process.** Mentors are told clearly what the concern is and given a genuine opportunity to respond before a final decision is made, except where safety requires acting first.
- **Respect and confidentiality.** Concerns are handled discreetly and with respect for everyone involved. Situations may be shared within the In2science team, withholding identifying information, to ensure they are handled consistently. No details will be shared beyond the team unless necessary.

4. Grounds for discontinuation

Concerns generally fall into one of three categories. The category shapes which process applies (see Section 5).

4.1 Performance and engagement concerns

These are addressed through a supportive, staged process. Examples include:

- Missing scheduled sessions without notice, or repeated lateness.
- Using personal devices inappropriately during class time.
- Not responding to the Program Coordinator within expected timeframes (48 hours, as per the Role Description).
- Not completing required check-ins, surveys, training, or onboarding steps.

4.2 Conduct concerns

Lower-level conduct issues are also handled through the staged process in the first instance. Examples include:

- Not following the classroom teacher's direction or supporting the lesson as agreed.

- Unprofessional behaviour towards students, teachers, or school staff.
- Minor lapses in maintaining appropriate boundaries, where there is no safety concern.

4.3 Serious misconduct and immediate-risk concerns

Some concerns are serious enough to justify standing a mentor down immediately, regardless of whether earlier steps have occurred. These include, but are not limited to:

- Any conduct that places, or may place, a student's safety or wellbeing at risk.
- A breach of child safety obligations, including failing to meet mandatory reporting requirements.
- Not holding a current, valid Working with Children Check, or its suspension, expiry, or cancellation.
- Serious or repeated boundary violations, including inappropriate contact or communication with a student.
- Bullying, harassment, discrimination, threats, or violence.
- Attending a placement affected by alcohol or other drugs.
- Dishonesty in the recruitment or onboarding process, or other conduct that brings In2science or a partner university into serious disrepute.

5. The process

There are two pathways. The supportive and staged pathway applies to performance and conduct concerns (Sections 4.1 and 4.2). The immediate stand-down pathway applies to serious misconduct and immediate-risk concerns (Section 4.3).

5.1 Pathway A — Supportive and staged

Most concerns are resolved at Stage 1. The stages are followed in order, but a serious or repeated issue may move more quickly through them.

Stage 1 — Supportive conversation. The Program Coordinator raises the concern with the mentor in a private, supportive conversation. They listen to the mentor's perspective, agree what needs to change and what support is available, and keep a brief, factual note. Most issues are resolved here.

Stage 2 — Formal notice. If the concern is not resolved or recurs, the Coordinator confirms it in writing. The notice sets out the concern, the specific change expected, the support available, the timeframe for improvement (for example, the remainder of the placement or a set number of weeks), and a clear statement that the placement may be discontinued if the concern continues. The mentor is invited to respond, normally within 5 business days.

Stage 3 — Discontinuation decision. If the concern remains unresolved, the Coordinator recommends discontinuation to the Program Manager, who confirms the decision. The mentor is notified in writing, with reasons and information about how to request a review (Section 7).

5.2 Pathway B — Immediate stand-down

Where there is a reasonable concern of the kind described in Section 4.3, the placement should not continue while the concern is assessed.

Step 1 — Stand down. The Program Coordinator (or any In2science staff member) may immediately stand the mentor down from the placement. A stand-down is a precaution to keep everyone safe while the matter is looked into. It is not a finding that the mentor has done anything wrong.

Step 2 — Escalate. The Coordinator notifies the Program Manager without delay. Where the concern relates to a child's safety or wellbeing, child safety and reporting obligations are followed in parallel (Section 6). These obligations are not replaced by this policy.

Step 3 — Assess fairly. The Program Manager (with appropriate support) establishes the relevant facts and gives the mentor an opportunity to respond, unless doing so would compromise a child's safety, a police matter, or another formal process.

Step 4 — Decide. The Program Manager decides the outcome: return to placement, return with additional conditions or support, or discontinuation. The mentor is notified in writing, with reasons and review information.

6. Child safety and legal obligations

Child safety comes before every other consideration in this policy. Any concern about a child's safety or wellbeing is acted on under the relevant Victorian frameworks, including the Child Safe Standards (CCYP | Child Safe Standards), the Reportable Conduct Scheme where it applies (CCYP | Reportable Conduct Scheme), and mandatory reporting duties.

A decision to discontinue a placement is separate from, and does not satisfy, any obligation to report a concern to the appropriate authority. Reporting obligations are met independently of, and in addition to, any action under this policy.

A current and valid Working with Children Check is a condition of every placement. If a mentor's WWCC is not valid at any time, they are not eligible to continue and are stood down immediately.

7. Requesting a review

A mentor whose placement is discontinued may request a review. The request should be made in writing within 5 business days of being notified and should explain why the mentor believes the decision should be reconsidered.

The review considers whether this policy was followed and whether the decision was reasonable on the facts. It is carried out by the Program Director, or, where the Director made the original decision, by a senior staff member at one of In2science's partner universities (at an equivalent or higher level than the Director). The outcome is confirmed in writing and is final.

Where a mentor has been stood down on safety grounds, the stand-down remains in place while a review is underway.

8. Fairness, records, and confidentiality

In every case, In2science aims to act fairly and proportionately. Mentors are told clearly what the concern is, are given an opportunity to respond before a final decision (except where safety requires acting first), and may bring a support person to any formal meeting.

Coordinators keep proportionate, factual records of conversations, notices, and decisions. Records are stored securely, shared only on a need-to-know basis, and handled in line with privacy obligations and partner university requirements.

9. Communicating a discontinuation

Where a placement is discontinued, the Program Coordinator informs the partner school or classroom teacher promptly and shares only what is necessary. For eMentoring, the Coordinator arranges appropriate continuity for any affected eMentees. All communication respects the dignity and privacy of those involved.

10. Future placements

Discontinuation for a performance or minor conduct concern does not necessarily prevent a person from mentoring again in future; this is considered case by case. Discontinuation for serious misconduct or on child safety grounds will ordinarily mean the person is not eligible for future placements.

11. Roles and responsibilities

The table below summarises who does what under this policy. No single Coordinator finalises a discontinuation alone; the Program Director confirms the decision, which gives mentors a fair process and gives Coordinators clear backing.

Who	Responsibilities under this policy
Mentor	• Meet the expectations set out in the Mentor Role Description. • Engage openly in supportive conversations and respond to reasonable requests to address a concern. • Raise any difficulties affecting their placement with their Coordinator early.
Program Coordinator	• Identify and raise concerns promptly and fairly.

Who	Responsibilities under this policy
	• Lead the supportive and staged process (Stages 1 and 2). • Stand a mentor down immediately where there is a reasonable safety or serious-misconduct concern. • Recommend discontinuation to the Program Manager and keep proportionate records. • Meet child safety and reporting obligations.
Program Manager	• Confirm discontinuation decisions and decide the outcome of any immediate stand-down. • Ensure the policy is applied consistently across partner universities. • Consider requests for review. • Oversee child safety escalations and record-keeping.

Definitions:

Discontinuation — The ending of a mentor's placement before its scheduled completion.

Stand-down — The immediate, precautionary pausing of a placement while a serious concern is assessed. A stand-down is not, in itself, a finding of wrongdoing.

Program Coordinator — The In2science staff member at the relevant partner university responsible for a mentor's placement.

Program Manager — The staff member responsible for In2science operation, who confirms discontinuation decisions.

Program Director — The staff member with overall responsibility for In2science, who considers reviews.

WWCC — Working with Children Check, a condition of every placement.

Serious misconduct — Conduct of the kind described in Section 4.3, including any conduct that places a student's safety or wellbeing at risk.