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# UK Therapy Guild Academy of Integrative Counselling & Hypnotherapy Training Disciplinary Policy

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## 1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1. The UK Therapy Guild Academy of Integrative Counselling & Hypnotherapy (the "Academy") is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and professional learning environment for all students and staff. High standards of conduct are essential for the integrity of the therapeutic professions we train students to enter.

1.2. This policy sets out the formal procedure for addressing allegations of student misconduct that cannot be resolved informally. Its purpose is to ensure that any disciplinary matter is handled in a fair, consistent, and timely manner.

1.3. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Student Code of Conduct, the Complaints Policy, and the Fitness to Practice Policy. An issue raised under this policy may, where appropriate, be referred to the Fitness to Practice Policy if the misconduct calls into question a student's suitability to practice as a therapist.

## 2. Scope of the Policy

2.1. This policy applies to all enrolled students of the Academy.

2.2. It covers any conduct that is alleged to be in breach of the Academy's rules, regulations, or professional expectations as outlined in the Student Contract, Student Handbook, and other official policies. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Academic misconduct (e.g., plagiarism).
- Disruptive or anti-social behaviour, either on Academy premises or online.
- Bullying, harassment, or discrimination.
- Damage to property.
- Breaches of the Social Media and Digital Communication Policy.
- Unauthorised use, reproduction, or distribution of the Academy's intellectual property, including copyrighted course materials, logo, business name, or business model.
- Conduct that brings the Academy into disrepute.

## 3. Definitions of Misconduct

For the purpose of this policy, misconduct will be categorised as follows:

- **Minor Misconduct:** A less serious breach of rules or professional expectations (e.g., persistent lateness, minor disruption in class).
- **Serious Misconduct:** A significant breach that has a considerable negative impact on others or the Academy (e.g., plagiarism, bullying, a serious breach of confidentiality).
- **Gross Misconduct:** A fundamental breach of contract or conduct so serious that it may warrant immediate suspension or termination of enrolment (e.g., theft, violence, illegal activity, serious safeguarding breaches).

## 4. The Disciplinary Procedure

The procedure is designed to be fair and transparent, with an emphasis on resolving issues at the earliest and most appropriate stage.

### Stage 1: Informal Action

For instances of suspected minor misconduct, a staff member (usually the tutor) may address the issue informally with the student. This will involve a private conversation to discuss the concern, understand the student's perspective, and establish clear expectations for future conduct. A note of this informal discussion will be kept. If the behaviour continues, the matter will be escalated to Stage 2.

### Stage 2: Formal Investigation

1. **Initiation:** For allegations of serious misconduct, or where informal action has failed, the Director will initiate a formal investigation. The student will be notified in writing of the specific allegation(s) against them and that a formal investigation is underway.
2. **Investigating Officer:** The Director will act as or appoint an Investigating Officer (who has had no prior significant involvement) to gather evidence. This may include interviewing the student, the complainant, and any relevant witnesses, as well as reviewing any documentary evidence.
3. **Investigation Outcome:** Following the investigation, the Investigating Officer will produce a report. Based on the findings, the Director will decide one of the following:
  - **A. No Case to Answer:** The allegation is unfounded, and the matter is dismissed. The student will be informed in writing.
  - **B. Uphold with Written Warning:** The allegation is upheld, but can be managed with a formal sanction. The student will receive a Formal Written Warning or a Final Written Warning, which will be placed on their file.
  - **C. Refer to Disciplinary Hearing:** The allegation is sufficiently serious to warrant a Disciplinary Hearing.

### Stage 3: Disciplinary Hearing

1. **Notification:** If a hearing is required, the student will be given at least 10 working days' written notice. The notification will include:
  - The specific allegations and a summary of the evidence.
  - The date, time, and location of the hearing.
  - The names of the members of the Disciplinary Panel.

- The student's right to be accompanied by a friend, colleague, or representative.
2. **The Panel:** The Disciplinary Panel will consist of at least two senior representatives of UK Therapy Guild, one of whom may be an external professional.
  3. **The Hearing:** The student will have the opportunity to hear the case against them, respond to the allegations, present their own evidence, and ask questions.
  4. **Decision:** After the hearing, the Panel will deliberate in private. The student will be informed of the outcome and the reasons for the decision in writing, normally within 5 working days.

## 5. Sanctions

If an allegation of misconduct is upheld, the Disciplinary Panel may impose one or more of the following sanctions, depending on the severity of the misconduct:

- A Formal Written Warning or a Final Written Warning.
- A requirement to attend further training.
- A requirement to issue a written apology.
- Suspension from the course for a specified period.
- Referral of the case to the Fitness to Practice Policy.
- Termination of the student contract and expulsion from the Academy (usually reserved for gross misconduct).
  - In the event of termination, the full outstanding balance of the course fees will become immediately due and payable, in line with the terms of the Student Contract.

## 6. Appeals

A student may appeal against a decision made at a Disciplinary Hearing. An appeal must be submitted in writing to the Director within 10 working days of receiving the written outcome.

An appeal will only be considered on the following grounds:

- A procedural error occurred which materially affected the outcome.
- New evidence has come to light which could not have reasonably been presented at the hearing.
- The sanction imposed was disproportionate to the misconduct.

The appeal will be reviewed by an impartial party or panel not previously involved. The decision of the appeal review is final and will conclude the Disciplinary Procedure.