

Three Counties Academy Trust



Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents

#GN12

Last amended 6th May 2026 (v1.0)

Document lifespan: 3 years. Subject to annual compliance check. Next full review 5th May 2029.

Version history

Date	Version	Details	Actioned by	PDF to Websites	Word to Governor Hub
06.05.26	1.0	Creation of document. Formatted to house style and checked against model for updates	MF	✓	✓

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Code of Conduct Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DfE	Department for Education
TCAT	Three Counties Academy Trust

NB. Where the term “parent” or “parents” is used this includes those who act as carers or have parental responsibility.

Statement of intent

Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT) understands the benefits of using social media; however, if misused, the TCAT community could be negatively affected, such as damage to TCAT and our school's reputations.

This Code of Conduct sets out clear procedures for how we expect parents to conduct themselves on social media and when using messenger apps, with regard to TCAT or an individual school and its reputation.

We ask that parents read this document and ensure that they always act in accordance with the stipulations detailed below.

Where the term 'parents' is used throughout this policy it refers to anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil or acting in a legal capacity on their behalf in dealing with TCAT or an individual school and its staff.

1. Legal framework

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

- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [UK General Data Protection Regulation \(UK GDPR\)](#)
- [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)

Where legislation has been passed or updated during the shelf life of this policy, we will always apply the latest version available.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- Data Protection Policy (FI20)
- Complaints Policy and Procedures (GN9)
- Parent Code of Conduct (GN11)
- Photography and Images Policy (SG9)

Central TCAT policies have the policy number identified, e.g. "SG1". Where no policy number is identified this indicates the policy is a school specific policy available from an individual TCAT school's website. Where there is no policy number indicated but the document begins with "TCAT", then this indicates the document can be located on the TCAT website or be made available from TCAT Central Office.

2. Online safety and social media conduct

TCAT requests that parents behave in a civilised nature online and we will not tolerate any of the following online behaviour:

- Posting defamatory content about parents, pupils, the trust, school, or employees
- Complaining about TCAT's or any of our individual schools values and methods on social media
- Posting content containing confidential information regarding TCAT, any of our schools or any members of our community, e.g., a complaint outcome

- Contacting TCAT employees private accounts through social media, including requesting to ‘follow’ or ‘friend’ them, or sending them private messages, except where there is a friendship that pre-dates employment with TCAT, unless for purely social interaction
- Creating or joining private groups or chats that victimise or harass a member of staff, TCAT or any individual TCAT school in general
- Posting images of any staff members or pupils without their prior consent

TCAT retains the right to request that any damaging material is removed from social media websites.

If parents wish to raise a complaint this should be done through formal and established channels, TCAT has a Complaints Policy and Procedure in place.

We will take breaches of this Code of Conduct seriously and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches could lead to prosecution. Parents are instructed not to post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this Code of Conduct.

3. Online messaging

We expect parents to use messaging apps, such as Facebook Messenger, for purposes beneficial to themselves, TCAT and our schools, will not accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents
- Sending abusive messages to members of staff
- Sending frequent messages to members of staff
- Sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents, pupils, TCAT or any TCAT school
- Sharing confidential or sensitive information about members of staff, parents, pupils, TCAT or any TCAT school
- Bringing TCAT, an individual TCAT school or our staff into disrepute

We appreciate the simplicity and ease of instant messaging; keeping in contact outside of school can benefit TCAT and our school community by keeping it closer. We do not, however, condone parents sending frequent and unimportant messages to staff. Parents should understand that staff should not be contacted outside of working hours where possible. If parents wish to talk to staff, parents should arrange a meeting with the teacher by speaking to a member of staff at Reception.

Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, TCAT will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing. TCAT can request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory content, occurs online.

TCAT's complaints procedure will be followed as normal if any members of the Trust Board or a Local Governing Body cause any issues through their conduct whilst using online messaging.

The Executive Headteacher/CEO can, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body to deal with problems quickly and effectively.

The Executive Headteacher/CEO can request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents or parental bodies.

4. Photography and images

Parents may be permitted to take photos of their children at certain school events, such as sports day or during a theatre production; however, parents are only able to take photos of their own children and should only share photos of their own children on social media.

Parents must not take photos of other children, staff members or volunteers, nor post them on social media without the consent of those within the images or, where applicable, their parents.

During events outside of school, such as dropping children off at the school gate, or whilst visiting the school, parents must not take photos of any members of TCAT or the school community, nor share these photos on social media.

More information can be found within our Photography and Images Policy.

5. Responsibility

Parents are responsible for supporting TCAT and our schools by monitoring their own use of social media and online messaging. Parents must adhere to the Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents at all times.

Parents are responsible for ensuring they support TCAT and our schools by monitoring their children's use of social media and online messaging.

Monitoring and review

Lifespan of Document: 3 Years

At any point this Code of Conduct is updated or fully reviewed, it will be updated on the main TCAT website and will automatically update on all TCAT school websites simultaneously.

Where an annual check or other check results in minor changes, the Version History will be reviewed and updated with a change in the number following the decimal point, for example, v1.1 ⇒ v1.2. Where the Code of Conduct is reviewed in full, then the number before the decimal point will change and reset, for example v1.4 ⇒ v2.0.

Any changes made by the Executive Headteacher/CEO in collaboration with the Board Appointed Trustee will be passed to the Trust Board for ratification and subsequently be notified to Clerks to Local Governing Bodies and Headteachers/Heads of School.

The next scheduled full review date for this Code of Conduct is 23rd April 2029.

Date approved by the Board Appointed Trustee: 6th May 2026.

To be ratified and recorded in the minutes at the first Trust Board Meeting after 6th May 2026.

Trust Glossary

AA	Admissions Authority	H&S	Health and Safety
AAI	Adrenaline Auto-Injector (Epi Pen)	HoS	Head of School
ACM	Asbestos Containing Materials	HSE	Health and Safety Executive
AHT	Assistant Headteacher	ICO	Information Commissioners Office
AIR	Attendance Intervention Reviews	IDSR	Inspection Data Summary Report
APDR	Assess Plan Do Review Cycle	IHP	Individual Healthcare Plan
APIs	Application Programming Interfaces	IRMS	Information and Records Management Society
ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition	IWF	Internet Watch Foundation
ASP	Analyse School Performance	KCSIE	Keeping Children Safe in Education
ATH	Academy Trust Handbook	KS1/2/3/4	Key Stage 1/2/3/4
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds	LAC	Looked After Child
BAT	Board Appointed Trustee	LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
BCP	Business Continuity Plan	LGB	Local Governing Body
BFR	Budget Forecast Return	LLC	Low-Level Concerns
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	LSA	Learning Support Assistants
CFO	Chief Financial Officer	MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
CIF	Condition Improvement Fund	MAT	Multi-Academy Trust

CIN	Child in Need	MFA	Multi-Factor Authentication
CLA	Children Looked After	MFL	Modern Foreign Language
CMIE	Child Missing in Education	NCSC	National Cyber Security Centre
COO	Chief Operating Officer	NoV	Note of Visit
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health	NPQ	National Professional Qualifications
CP	Child Protection	PA	Persistent Absence
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	PAN	Published Admission Number
CPOMS	Child Protection Online Management System	PECR	Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations
CSCS	Children's Social Care Services	PEP	Personal Education Plan
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation	PEEP	Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan
CTIRU	Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit	PEx	Permanent Exclusion
CWD	Children with Disabilities	PP	Pupil Premium
CYPMHS	Children and Young People's Mental Health Services	PPG	Pupil Premium Grant
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service	PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
DDSL	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty
DfE	Department for Education	PTFA	Parent, Teacher and Friends Association
DHT	Deputy Headteacher	QA	Quality Assurance

DSE	Display Screen Equipment	RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead	RHE	Relationships and Health Education
DPO	Data Protection Officer	RPA	Risk Protection Arrangement
EAL	English as an Additional Language	RSHE	Relationships, Sex and Health Education
ECT	Early Career Teacher	SA	Severely Absent
EDIB	Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging	SALT	Speech and Language Therapist
EHA	Early Help Assessment	SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
EHCNA	Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment	SBM	School Business Manager
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan	SCC	Standard Contractual Clause
EHE	Elective Home Education	SCITT	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant	SCR	Single Central Record
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency	SDP	School Development Plan
EVC	Educational Visit Coordinator	SDQ	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
EWOSSO	Education Welfare and Safeguarding Support Officer	SEF	Self-Evaluation Form
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage	SEMH	Social, Emotional, and Mental Health
FBV	Fundamental British Values	SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
FFT	Fischer Family Trust	SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	SIP	School Improvement Partner
FGMPO	FGM Protection Order	SLA	Service Level Agreement
FOI	Freedom of Information	SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
FSM	Free School Meals	SLT	Senior Leadership Team
FTS	Find a Tender Service	SPOC	Single Point of Contact
GAG	General Annual Grant	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation	TA	Teaching Assistant
GIAS	Get Information about Schools	TAC	Team Around the Child
HASH	Herefordshire Association of Secondary Heads	TCAT	Three Counties Academy Trust
HBA	Honour Based Abuse	TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)
HR	Human Resources	VSH	Virtual School Headteacher