

**Three Counties Academy Trust**



# Lost Property and Liability Policy

## #GN6

Last amended 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026 (v1.2)

Policy lifespan: 3 years. Subject to annual compliance check. Next full review 19<sup>th</sup> March 2029.

### Version history

Date	Version	Details	Actioned by	PDF to Websites	Word to Governor Hub
20.03.26	1.0	Formatted to house style and checked against model for updates	MF	✓	✓
06.05.26	1.1	Updated formatting, no contextual changes	MF	✓	✓
19.06.26	1.2	Trustee, Local Governor and Staff Summary, and Parent Summary added	MF	✓	✓

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**Policy Abbreviations and Acronyms**

<b>ABM</b>	Academy Business Manager
<b>CFO</b>	Chief Financial Officer
<b>MCAS</b>	My Child At School
<b>TCAT</b>	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 that pupils and staff may bring their personal items onto TCAT premises, and, in some circumstances, these items may become lost, damaged or stolen. Whilst TCAT and our schools strongly discourage bringing high-value items onto TCAT premises, it is inevitable that some staff members and pupils may wish to do so.

TCAT has developed this policy to:

- Provide a framework for any lost property within any TCAT premises
- Clarify the pupils' and staff members' responsibility for the liability of their own items
- Outline TCAT's policy on any damages incurred to TCAT equipment and facilities

## **Trustee, Local Governor and Staff Summary**

### **Purpose of the Policy**

- Provides a consistent framework for managing lost, found, damaged and stolen property across TCAT
- Clarifies that individuals are responsible for their own belongings
- Sets out TCAT's position on liability, damage and security arrangements

### **Key Principles**

- TCAT does not accept responsibility for personal items unless due to proven negligence
- All items are brought onto site at the owner's risk
- Reasonable efforts will be made to return items to their rightful owner
- High value items are strongly discouraged on site

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Trust Board / LGBs: oversee security and review effectiveness
- Headteachers/Heads of School: implement policy and investigate incidents
- Admin staff: manage lost property systems and records
- All stakeholders: responsible for their own belongings and handing in found items

### **Liability and Damage**

- Individuals are liable for damage caused to TCAT property
- Repair costs may be recovered where appropriate
- TCAT remains impartial in disputes involving personal property

### **High Value Items and Security**

- Owners must take responsibility for securing high value items

- Schools may provide lockers and secure storage
- Items are not covered by TCAT's insurance

### **Lost and Found Procedures**

- Lost items must be reported to the school office
- All items are recorded and stored securely
- Unclaimed items may be donated or disposed of after a full term

### **Theft**

- All suspected theft must be reported and investigated
- Disciplinary procedures apply where theft is proven
- TCAT does not accept liability for stolen items

### **Monitoring and Governance**

- Policy reviewed annually with full review every three years
- Updates ratified by the Trust Board and shared with schools

## **Parent Summary**

### **What this means for families**

- Children and families are responsible for their own belongings in school
- TCAT will do its best to return lost items, but cannot guarantee this
- Items are brought into school at the owner's risk

### **What parents should know**

- Please avoid sending high value items into school (e.g. phones, jewellery, large amounts of cash)
- Label all clothing and belongings clearly to help return items quickly
- Encourage children to hand any found items to the school office

### **Keeping items safe**

- Schools provide secure storage where possible (e.g. lockers or office storage)
- Valuable items should be handed to the school office during the day where appropriate
- TCAT does not insure personal belongings

### **If something is lost**

- Contact the school office as soon as possible
- The school will check the Lost Property system and try to identify the owner
- Items can only be returned once ownership is confirmed

### **If something is found**

- All items should be handed to the school office
- The school will attempt to contact the owner where possible
- Unclaimed items may be donated or disposed of after a full term

**Cash and sensitive items**

- Cash should be handed in immediately to the school office and a receipt obtained
- Personal identification items are held securely and may be passed to the police if unclaimed

**Damage or theft**

- TCAT is not responsible for damage to personal items unless due to negligence
- Parents may be asked to cover the cost of damage caused to school property
- Any concerns about theft should be reported to the school promptly

**Key message**

- Please support your child by naming items, avoiding valuables, and reporting any issues quickly

## Legal framework

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

- [Theft Act 1968](#)
- [Occupiers' Liability Act 1957](#)

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

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Surveillance and CCTV Policy (FI21)
- Complaints Policy and Procedure (GN9)
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedures (HR3)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy (SG25)

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.

## Definitions

The policy defines:

- **"Property"** as any item belonging to a person, where that person has possession and control over it
- **"Lost property"** as an item which the owner has lost but wishes to recover
- **"Mislaid property"** as an item which the owner has inadvertently left in a location and wishes to recover
- **"Found property"** as an item not belonging to the finder that has either been lost or mislaid by the owner or can be treated as abandoned property

- **“Abandoned property”** as an item that the owner has seemingly abandoned and thereby may be deemed to have relinquished ownership of
- **“Non-returned item”** as an item that is unidentifiable, unlawful or dangerous
- **“Damaged property”** as an item that has been defiled so that there is an impairment to its value, usefulness or normal function
- **“Stolen property”** as an item that has been taken without the owner’s knowledge or consent by a person who does not own the item
- **“Personal identification”** item is any document, card or unique identifier that validates an individual’s identity often linking them to official records. These items are used to verify a person’s name, age, address or citizenship

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The Trust Board and where delegated Local Governing Bodies will be responsible for:

- Undertaking security risk assessments to protect people and their valuables
- Reviewing the effectiveness of this policy as required
- Delegating the day-to-day implementation of this policy to Headteachers/Heads of School

Headteachers/Head of School will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy
- Ensuring that this policy is communicated to all staff members, volunteers, parents and pupils
- Enforcing sanctions on any individual found to be stealing or damaging property
- Investigating instances of theft

The Trust Estate Manager will be responsible for:

- Ensuring each school site is as secure as possible to avoid theft of, or damage to, school and individuals’ property
- Ensuring any lost or abandoned property is removed from the vicinity of access and exit points

Administrative staff will be responsible for:

- The administration of lost property
- Ensuring lost property is held in a secure location for collection
- Informing individuals of found property if it is known to be theirs
- Keeping a log of stolen or damaged property
- Ensuring items are returned to the rightful owner where possible
- Disposing of unclaimed abandoned property

All staff; pupils, parents and visitors will be responsible for:

- The security of their own possessions
- Handing in lost property when it is found
- Labelling possessions where possible to avoid loss or theft
- Checking lost property when they have lost an item

## **Liability**

TCAT and our schools will not take responsibility for items lost or handed in to us; however, we will endeavour to return items to their owner as quickly as possible.

Pupils, parents and staff members are responsible for their personal property and possessions whilst on TCAT premises, or when partaking in school activities such as trips and school events.

TCAT and our schools will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or theft of personal property unless that is as a direct result of negligence on the part of TCAT. Pupils, parents and staff members bring items onto the premises at their own risk – this includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Jewellery
- Electronic devices, including mobile phones and tablets

- Keys
- Money
- Bicycles, scooters, skateboards or other

Pupils, parents, staff members and visitors will be held accountable for any damage incurred to TCAT property and facilities due to their negligence.

## **Damage**

If an individual intentionally damages TCAT-owned equipment or facilities, they will be charged the price of the repair.

Where a pupil causes damage, and the damage was inflicted due to negligence or misbehaviour, the school's Behaviour Policy will be followed, and the appropriate disciplinary measures adhered to.

If a pupil causes damage to TCAT property or facilities, the Headteacher/Head of School will, following discussion with the CFO or ABM, send a notification letter to the pupil's parents, which includes a payment notice.

If an individual intentionally damages another person's property, TCAT will not be held accountable, and it will remain impartial.

Should an individual receive a demand for payment and disagree with the charge, they will follow TCAT's Complaints Policy and Procedures, which can be found on each TCAT schools website.

Where a TCAT school has CCTV in place, footage can be used as evidence, as well as a protective measure. TCAT's Surveillance and CCTV Policy will be adhered to at all times and CCTV will be used in accordance with the Surveillance and CCTV Policy.

## **High value items**

TCAT strongly discourages pupils, parents and staff members from bringing high value items, such as electronic devices, jewellery and bicycles, onto TCAT premises.

If high value property is brought onto the premises, it is the owner's responsibility to ensure that the property is safe and secure.

Where possible, TCAT schools will provide the following arrangements for individuals to safely store their personal items:

- Assigned lockers for pupils
- Lockers within the staff room and school office
- Bicycle locks

Whilst TCAT schools provide secure arrangements for individuals to store their personal items, neither TCAT or the school is liable for any loss, damage or theft of any item once stored.

If large amounts of money must be brought onto TCAT premises, e.g. to pay for a school trip, parents or pupils will ensure that it is handed to the relevant teacher, or the school office, as soon as possible and that a receipt is obtained.

Wherever possible, parents are encouraged to use MCAS rather than cash as a safer alternative.

Pupils and staff are encouraged to implement appropriate insurance arrangements for their high value items, should they become damaged, lost or stolen.

Pupils' and staffs' items are not covered by TCAT's insurance.

## **Safekeeping of valuables**

### **Pupils**

Pupils can take their item to their school office where administrative staff will enter the item on the Valuable Item log.

Pupils should collect their item at the end of the school day.

When collecting the item, pupils will sign the Valuable Item Log to indicate the item has been returned to them.

Valuables that cannot be handed into the school office, such as bicycles, will be stored using alternative secure arrangements, such as bicycle locks, which, where available, can be collected from the school office.

## **Staff**

Staff will not leave bags or other valuables on display in the classroom – these items will be locked in a cupboard in the classroom, or in the staff room.

Staff will, where possible, lock classroom doors when leaving the room unattended.

Any items of significant value will be placed in a secure area, such as the staff room.

Valuables that cannot be stored in the staff room, such as bicycles, should be stored using alternative secure arrangements, such as bicycle locks, which can be collected from the school office.

## **Lost property**

Where lost property is found on the TCAT Central Office site, and the identity of the owner cannot be established, this property will be logged and stored in line with the procedures outlined in this policy.

Where lost property is found it will be reported to the school office immediately and recorded in the Lost Property Book.

When a claimant comes to the school office, the administrative staff will refer to the Lost Property Book.

Additional details may be sought where necessary to ascertain whether the item is the claimants, e.g. checking knowledge of a screensaver on a mobile phone.

If the item has been handed in, it will be returned to the claimant once their identity has been ascertained and their name and address has been recorded in the Lost Property Book, unless they are non-returnable items, as outlined in the Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy.

School administrative staff will:

- Immediately notify the police of any non-returnable items as required, in accordance with TCAT's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy

- Notify staff via email of any identifiable and returnable value items of personal identification and returnable high/low value items of property, so that an email, letter or text message can be dispatched to the owner
- Notify the police of any returnable value items of personal identification if unclaimed after five school days
- Ensure that returnable value items of personal identification or non-returnable items are retained securely and safely until collected by the police

Returnable items of personal identification and non-returnable items will not be retained on the premises for any longer than five working days, except where requested to do so by an appropriate authority.

Cash or items containing cash that are handed in will be placed in a sealed envelope and recorded in the Lost Property Book.

## **Found property**

All found property will be handed into the school office and recorded in the Lost Property Book.

Property not reclaimed after a full term will be treated as abandoned property and may be donated to charity.

Handling and recording found property is the responsibility of school administrative staff.

A record of abandoned property will be held within the school office.

An attempt will be made by school administrative staff to notify the owner of returnable items of personal identification and returnable high/low-value items either by email, letter or text message.

If the owner does not respond within five working days, the returnable value items of personal identification will be handed to the police, to whom any subsequent claim will be made.

If, by the end of the full-term following notification, returnable high/low-value items remain unclaimed, the item will be treated as abandoned property and will be disposed of.

In the case of cash, unclaimed monies may be donated to a charitable project chosen by the Trust Board.

For unidentifiable returnable high/low-value items where there is an expiry date, e.g. concert tickets, the school administrative staff will endeavour to send an email to all staff and pupils advertising the found property without divulging details.

Whenever items are disposed of, the Lost Property Book will be updated accordingly and signed by a member of the school office staff.

Abandoned property will be handed over to a charity, placed in the general waste, recycled, or securely disposed of, depending on the nature of the item.

## **Reclaiming property**

Claims for lost/mislaid property will be made to the school office in the first instance.

Claimants will produce valid identification or a reference number and sign the Lost Property Book before property is released to them.

For cash or items containing cash to be released, the sealed envelope will be opened by the claimant and witnessed by a member of school administrative staff and one other person.

## **Theft**

Whilst TCAT recognises that theft is rare, if a pupil believes an item has been stolen, they will report this immediately to a member of staff, who will investigate the incident and endeavour to recover the item.

If it is evident that a pupil or staff member has stolen an item, appropriate disciplinary measures will be actioned in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy or TCAT's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

TCAT and our schools will not accept liability for any items that are stolen, regardless of whether staff members assist with attempting to recover the item.

## **Monitoring and review**

At any point this policy 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 policy 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 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 policy is 19<sup>th</sup> March 2029.

Date approved by the Board Appointed Trustee: 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

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

**Appendix A: Valuable Item Log**

Item number	Description of item and finders identity	Name of owner	Date handed in	Pupil's class	Collection signature
<u>001</u>	<u>Mobile phone in blue case, picture of cocker spaniel as background – Mr jones</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>2B</u>	

### Appendix B: Lost Property Book

Item number	Description of item and finders identity	Date handed in	Identifiable features	Date returned	Name of owner if known	Collection signature
<u>001</u>	<u>Silver coloured necklace – Mr Jones</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Butterfly pendant</u>	<u>12/11/2018</u>	<u>Jane Bloggs</u>	

## Trust Glossary

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

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

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

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