

Three Counties Academy Trust



Lost Property and Liability Policy

#GN6

Last amended 20th March 2026 (v1.1)

Subject to periodic review. To be reviewed no later than 19th March 2029

Version history

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Common abbreviations and acronyms

AA	Admissions Authority	GPA	Government Procurement Arrangement
AAI	Adrenaline Auto-Injector (Epi Pen)	HASH	Herefordshire Association of Secondary Heads
ACM	Asbestos Containing Materials	HBV	Honour Based Violence
AFH	Academies Financial Handbook	HR	Human Resources
AHT	Assistant Headteacher	H&S	Health and Safety
AIR	Attendance Intervention Reviews	HoS	Head of School
APIs	Application Programme Interfaces	HSE	Health and Safety Executive
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds	ICO	Information Commissioners Office
BCP	Business Continuity Plan	IHP	Individual Healthcare Plan
BFR	Budget Forecast Return	IRMS	Information and Records Management Society
CYPMHS	Children and Young People's Mental Health Services	IWF	Internet Watch Foundation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	KCSIE	Keeping Children Safe in Education
CFO	Chief Financial Officer	KS1/2/3/4	Key Stage 1/2/3/4
CIF	Condition Improvement Fund	LAC	Looked After Child
CIN	Child in Need	LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
CLA	Children Looked After	LGB	Local Governing Body
CMIE	Child Missing in Education	LLC	Low-Level Concerns

COO	Chief Operating Officer	LSA	Learning Support Assistants
COSHH	Control and Substances Hazardous to Health	MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
CP	Child Protection	MAT	Multi-Academy Trust
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	MFA	Multi-Factor Authentication
CSCS	Children's Social Care Services	MFL	Modern Foreign Language
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation	NCSC's	National Cyber Security Centres
CTIRU	Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit	NPQEL	National Professional Qualification in Executive Leadership
CWD	Children with Disabilities	PA	Persistent Absence
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service	PAN	Published Admission Number
DDSL	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	PECR	Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations
DfE	Department for Education	PEP	Personal Education Plan
DHT	Deputy Headteacher	PEEP	Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan
DSE	Display Screen Equipment	PEx	Permanent Exclusion
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead	PLAC	Previously Looked After Child
DPO	Data Protection Officer	PP	Pupil Premium
EAL	English as an Additional Language	PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
ECT	Early Career Teacher	PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty

EHA	Early Help Assessment	PTFA	Parent, Teacher and Friends Association
EHCNA	Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment	RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan	RHE	Relationships and Health Education
EHE	Elective Home Education	RSHE	Relationships, Sex and Health Education
ELSA	Emotional, Literacy and Support Assistant	SALT	Speech and Language Therapist
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency	SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
EVC	Educational Visit Coordinator	SBM	School Business Manager
EWO	Education Welfare and Safeguarding Support Officer	SCCs	Standard Contractual Clauses
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage	SDQ	Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
FBV	Fundamental British Values	SEMH	Social, Emotional, and Mental Health
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation	SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
FOI	Freedom of Information	SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
FSM	Free School Meals	SLA's	Service Level Agreements
FTS	Find a Tender Service	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
GAG	General Annual Grant	TA	Teaching Assistant
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation	TCAT	Three Counties Academy Trust
GIAS	Get Information about Schools	VSH	Virtual School Headteacher

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 school
- 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

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

1. 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.

2. 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

3. 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 secure 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

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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 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 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.

8. Lost property

Lost property 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.

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

9. Found property

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

Property not reclaimed after a term will be treated as abandoned property.

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 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.

10. 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.

11. 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

This policy will be reviewed in line with the published schedule at the front of this document and at any point material changes require it by the Executive Headteacher/CEO in collaboration with the Board appointed Trustee, the Trust Board and Executive and Senior Leadership.

Any changes made to the policy will be amended by the Executive Headteacher/CEO and will be communicated to Executive Leaders, the TCAT Central Team and to Headteachers/Heads of School, who, in turn, will alert school-based staff.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is 19th March 2029.

Signed by:

_____ Executive Headteacher/CEO

Date: _____

_____ Board appointed Trustee

Date: _____

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>	