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Lone Worker Policy

#HR17

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**Statement of intent**

Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT) recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves, without close or direct supervision and sometimes in isolated work areas or outside of normal school and office hours.

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of staff. The policy outlines lone working procedures and what is expected of employees who undertake lone working.

This policy aims to:

* Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working
* Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic way and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce that risk so far as is reasonably practicable
* Ensure that appropriate support and training is available to all staff that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on staying safe when working alone
* Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working
* Reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working

# Legal framework

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

* Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
* The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

This policy operates in conjunction with the following TCAT and school policies:

* Health and Safety Policy
* Lone Worker Risk Assessment
* Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
* Physical Intervention Policy
* Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
* Home Visit Risk Assessment

# Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, ‘**lone working**’ refers to situations where staff, in the course of their duties, work alone either on or off TCAT premises and are physically isolated from colleagues, possibly without immediate access to assistance.

Due to the possibility of buildings creating isolated areas, it is possible for a staff member to be ‘lone working’ with other staff members in the building.

# Roles and responsibilities

The Executive Headteacher/CEO is responsible for:

* Ensuring that there are arrangements in place for identifying, evaluating, and managing the risks associated with lone working
* Implementing this policy
* Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working
* Reviewing this policy on a regular basis

Line managers are responsible for:

* Ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy
* Taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees
* Identifying situations where staff work alone and deciding whether systems can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own
* Ensuring that the relevant risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly
* Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with lone working
* Ensuring that staff identified as lone workers are given appropriate information, instruction and training that is updated as necessary
* Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through a robust system of reporting, investigating, and recording incidents
* Ensuring that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident
* Providing lone workers with personal safety equipment, e.g., a mobile phone, where necessary

Lone workers are responsible for:

* Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their working
* Following TCAT’s policies and procedures for safe working
* Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others, and asking for advice as appropriate
* Taking part in training related to lone working as required
* Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone
* Seeking the permission of a member of the Trust Central Team or their Headteacher/Head of School before working alone
* Ensuring they have the necessary equipment with them while lone working
* Adhering to all necessary policies and procedures at all times while lone working

# Authorisation

The members of the TCAT Central Team, in conjunction with Headteachers/Heads of School, will develop an approved list of lone working activities, outlining situations where lone working may be authorised and the necessary precautions and work methods to be followed.

Staff members will request authorisation from their TCAT Central Team Line Managers or their Headteacher/Head of School to undertake lone working.

Subject to the completion of a risk assessment, lone working will be authorised if it is on the approved list. If the lone working is not on the approved list, it can only be undertaken following explicit authorisation from the TCAT Executive Leadership Team.

# Risk assessment

Prior to a member of staff undertaking lone working, a risk assessment will be conducted by the relevant member of the TCAT Central Team or the Headteacher/Head of School.

The risk assessment will cover all work proposed to be undertaken alone and where risk may be increased by the work activity itself or by the lack of available assistance should something go wrong.

Depending on the tasks the lone worker is proposing to undertake, the risk assessment will cover the following as appropriate:

* The staff member’s medical fitness and suitability to work alone
* Channels of communication
* Any specific risks related to the lone working activity
* The risk of violence
* Access and egress
* Reporting and recording arrangements
* The ability to trace the staff member’s whereabouts
* Situational hazards

A log of known risks, including locations, individuals, and tasks, will be kept, updated, and regularly reviewed. This log will be kept securely in the TCAT Central Office and lone workers can request to see parts of the log relevant to their lone working.

Any person who becomes aware of circumstances involving lone working, where the existing control measures may not be fully effective, will inform the TCAT Central Team or their Headteacher/Head of Schoolas soon as possible.

# Procedures for lone workers

A record will be kept in the TCAT Central Office containing details of all staff members that undertake lone working, including the tasks they undertake, where they undertake them and when.

During working hours, all loner workers leaving their workplace will provide written details with their TCAT Central Team Line Manager or their Headteacher/Head of School of where they are going and their estimated time of arrival back at the school.

If, during a trip away from a TCAT school, a lone worker’s plans change significantly, they will contact their TCAT Central Team Line Manager or their Headteacher/Head of School to inform them of changes to their schedule.

All lone workers will have access to a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where necessary. Lone workers will ensure they have all of their provided personal safety equipment with them prior to lone working and that the equipment is working.

Lone workers will avoid organising meetings where they will be alone with an individual or group. Where this is unavoidable, the lone worker will obtain prior approval from their TCAT Central Team Line Manager or their Headteacher/Head of School who will make any arrangements to ensure the staff member’s safety. Any appointments of this nature will be recorded.

If a staff member is required to work alone with a child or vulnerable adult, they will follow the procedures outlined in the TCAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Lone workers will have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers will carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.

Under no circumstances should a lone worker compromise their personal safety. If a lone worker feels in danger, they will remove themselves from the situation immediately.

TCAT operates a ‘buddy’ system, whereby lone workers have a designated member of staff that will:

* Be aware of the schedule and movements of the lone worker
* Have all necessary contact details of the lone worker
* Attempt to contact the lone worker if contact is not made as agreed
* Follow agreed escalation procedures and notify the TCAT Executive Leadership Team of any incidents

Contingency arrangements will be in place for a member of staff to take over the ‘buddy’ role in case the nominated person becomes unavailable.

Where there is a genuine concern about the whereabouts or safety of a lone worker, the TCAT Central Team will use the information held on record to try and ascertain the whereabouts of the worker. If contact cannot be made, the Executive Headteacher/CEO will decide on the best course of action depending on the circumstances, which could include contacting the emergency services.

# Home visits

A list of home visits is kept securely in the individual TCAT school’s administration areas. This record includes details of the following:

* The address the lone worker is visiting
* Details of the persons whom they are visiting
* A known contact number for the lone worker and the persons they are visiting
* How long the lone worker expects to be at the location

Once in place, appointment arrangements should be adhered to. The lone worker will notify their TCAT Central Team Line Manager or their Headteacher/Head of School of any changes to their schedule.

Visits deemed high risk, e.g., where there is a history of violence or the location is high risk, will only be undertaken if absolutely necessary. In these cases, the lone worker may request a meeting in a more suitable location or to be accompanied by another member of staff. A Home Visit Risk Assessment will be undertaken where necessary.

During a home visit, the lone worker will:

* Carry an ID badge and be prepared to identify themselves
* Carry out a ‘10 second risk assessment’ when they first arrive at the location. If they feel in danger, they should have an appropriate reason to not enter the house and arrange an alternative appointment
* Be aware of any animals in the house and ask for them to be secured in a separate room
* Ensure that they shut the door behind them and make themselves familiar with the door lock, in case an emergency exit is required
* Not position themselves in the corner of a room or in a situation where it is difficult to escape
* Remain calm and focussed at all times, and keep their possessions close to them

# Safeguarding

Where a lone worker is required to work with pupils, physical intervention will only ever be used as a last resort and will be conducted in line with the TCAT Physical Intervention Policy.

If a lone worker is required to conduct one-to-one sessions with pupils, the following guidelines will be adhered to:

* A full and appropriate risk assessment will be undertaken prior to any sessions taking place
* TCAT’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be adhered to at all times
* Full and ongoing training regarding child protection, physical restraint and the use of reasonable force will be provided to the worker
* Meetings or sessions will never be held in remote or secluded areas
* At least one other member of staff will be informed of when and where a one-to-one session is taking place
* The lone worker will not use ‘engaged’ or equivalent signs on rooms used for one-to-one session
* Doors will be kept open during sessions – where this is not possible, the worker will ensure both parties are visible through a window
* When holding the session, the worker will talk to the pupil with a desk between them, or otherwise arrange the room or environment to avoid unnecessary physical contact
* Both parties will sit near to the door during sessions
* If a pupil becomes emotionally distressed or angry, the worker will seek assistance and a record will be kept of the incident

Any allegations against a lone worker will be dealt with in line with TCAT’s Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

# Training

All lone workers will be fully trained in safe working practices.

Lone workers will undertake additional training that is relevant to their lone working, e.g., first aid.

# Safety issues

Lone workers will report incidents such as accidents, near misses and threatening situations to their TCAT Central Team Line Manager or their Headteacher/Head of School who will make a record.

Lone workers should raise any safety concerns with their line manager, who will arrange for additional precautionary measures to be put in place.

# 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, Chief Finance Officer and the Executive Leader for Safeguarding and Inclusion in conjunction with the Trust Board and Headteachers/Heads of School. Any changes made to the policy will be amended by the Executive Headteacher/CEO and will be communicated to all members of staff.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is 31st August 2026.

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| Signed by: | | | |
|  | Executive Headteacher/CEO | Date: |  |
|  | Chair of the Trust Board | Date: |  |