

# Three Counties Academy Trust



## Head-Lice Policy

#HS12

Last amended 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026 (v1.1)

Subject to periodic amendment. To be reviewed in full no later than 12<sup>th</sup> January 2029

## Version history

Date	Version	Details	Actioned by	PDF to Websites	Word to Governor Hub
13.01.26	1.1	Formatted to house style and checked against model for updates	MF	✓	✓

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## Common abbreviations and acronyms

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

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

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

## **Statement of intent**

Head lice are a common problem among school-aged children and can be a very distressing to experience.

We are committed to protecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of pupils at Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT). For this reason, all staff members, pupils, and parents are required to act in accordance with this policy in relation to the identification, treatment, and prevention of head lice, in order to reduce the risk of potential infestations spreading.

This policy aims to minimise the social stigma associated with head lice infestations, whilst ensuring staff members and parents are aware of the actions to take when head lice are present within a TCAT school.

**NB. 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:

- UK Health Security Agency 'Health protection in education and childcare facilities'

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
- Health and Safety Policy (HS1)
- Anti-Bullying Policy (SG19)
- Attendance Policy (Secondary) (SG29(A))
- Attendance Policy (Primary) (SG29(B))
- Infection Control Policy (SG32)

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

**Head lice** – small, six-legged and wingless insects which live on, and close to, the scalp at the base of hair, often causing itching two to three weeks after coming into contact with someone who has head lice. They are spread by head-to-head contact.

**Nits** – small, empty white shells are left behind when head lice hatch, found further along the hair shaft. If an individual has nits, it does not necessarily mean that live head lice are present, but appropriate treatment should still be sought.

Head lice and nits are not harmful but can be an extremely distressing experience for both pupil and parent, as well as for school employees.

For the purpose of this policy, the term '**outbreak**' is used to describe where there are more than two cases of head lice present at the school at the same time.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for:

- Making parents and staff members aware of this policy
- Acting as the designated person to address head lice queries and concerns
- Implementing this policy throughout their school
- Ensuring that all parents and staff members understand their responsibilities in relation to individuals' privacy
- Collaborating with the school nurse when providing pupils and parents with advice regarding the identification and treatment of head lice
- Ensuring that pupils with head lice are not excluded from activities or made to feel victimised
- Being aware of head lice signs, symptoms, causes and incubation periods
- Remaining informed and up to date regarding the identification, treatment and prevention of head lice
- Providing pupils and parents with advice regarding head lice
- Maintaining the confidentiality of pupils and families involved in cases of head lice infestation

All staff members are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with this policy
- Being aware of head lice signs and symptoms
- Providing parents with advice on the prevention and detection of head lice, or directing them to the school nurse or GP, as necessary
- Creating an inclusive environment at all times in which pupils with head lice are not subject to prejudice or discriminated against
- Maintaining a visual check of pupils for head lice
- Reporting concerns and directing queries about head lice to the Headteacher/Head of School or the school nurse

Parents are responsible for:

- Being aware of head lice signs and symptoms
- Ensuring that their child maintains a sufficient level of hygiene, grooming and hair care
- Identifying cases of head lice and notifying the school of these immediately

- Responding to and actively addressing concerns about their child pertaining to the presence, or potential presence, of head lice
- Undertaking all preventative measures advised by the Headteacher/Head of School or the school nurse
- Carrying out wet combing on a regular basis during an outbreak
- Treating their child for head lice as soon as they have been diagnosed

#### **4. Identified cases**

Parents are primarily responsible for identifying, reporting and treating their child's head lice.

If staff members notice head lice in an individual pupil's hair, they will privately inform the parent in person, advising them to treat their child's hair, and will notify the Headteacher/Head of School of the matter.

If staff members notice head lice in numerous pupils' hair, or a particular group of pupils, they will report the matter to the Headteacher/Head of School, who will then be responsible for notifying the necessary parties.

Where more than two pupils have been identified as having head lice at the same time, a letter will be sent home to all parents notifying them that an outbreak of head lice has been reported and asking all parents to check their child's hair.

The names of the pupils involved in an outbreak of head lice will not be disclosed.

Parents will be reminded about the importance of early identification and their responsibilities in relation to detection on a regular basis via newsletters, emails or the school website.

Pupils with head lice are expected to still attend school and will not be excluded for medical reasons. Where a pupil does not attend school due to head lice, they will be registered as having an unauthorised absence in accordance with the Attendance Policy relevant to their setting.

Unacceptable behaviour, such as name calling, towards pupils or families of pupils with head lice will not be tolerated. Where exclusive behaviour is present, pupils will be disciplined in accordance with the individual school's Behaviour Policy and TCATs Anti-Bullying Policy.

## 5. Prevention

TCAT recognises that, whilst head lice cannot be prevented, measures can be taken in order to aid early detection and reduce the risk of lice spreading, such as daily hair brushing and grooming.

Pupils and parents will be provided with information regarding the prevention of head lice, explaining what they can do at home to reduce the risk of an outbreak.

All staff members will be aware of the risk posed by head lice and will be capable of providing advice to parents regarding the identification and treatment of head lice. Where staff members experience difficulty answering a parent's query, they should consult the Headteacher/Head of School.

Contact precautions will be used to control the spread of head lice, e.g. pupils will be discouraged from sharing personal items such as combs, hats and scarves.

Where lice or nits are present, personal items like hats and scarves will be kept separate to the belongings of pupils where lice and nits are not present.

Pupils will be encouraged to tie long hair back, particularly where lice or nits are present.

Parents are expected to ensure that their child maintains a sufficient level of cleanliness and hygiene, including the brushing and grooming of hair.

Staff members, including the school nurse, will not inspect pupils' hair for lice, but will report it to the pupil's parents as soon as practically possible.

It is the responsibility of parents to inspect their child's hair for lice as described in the Transmission section of this policy.

Parents will be discouraged from using treatments, such as those containing insecticides, as a preventative measure, advising parents that this will hinder treating lice in the future. Instead, parents will be encouraged to 'wet comb,' also known as 'detection comb,' their child's hair on a regular basis.

## **6. Transmission**

It is recognised that head lice are contagious and can be contracted by direct head-to-head contact, and thus are a higher risk amongst younger pupils due to their increased bodily contact; therefore, all possible precautions, as outlined in the Prevention section of this policy, to help reduce the risk of transmission of head lice will be taken.

Where a child is identified as having head lice, the parent is responsible for ensuring that all members of the family are checked and, if necessary, treated.

Regular checks will be carried out following treatment, helping to prevent further infestation and transmission.

To help parents identify cases of head lice, TCAT schools will provide information about what to look out for, as well as dispelling any myths regarding transmission, such as that they can fly or that only unhygienic people get them.

Each TCAT school will provide parents with useful contacts where additional information can be accessed. Affected families will be reassured that having head lice is nothing to be ashamed of.

## **7. Treatment**

When asked for advice regarding treatment, staff members will not endorse one particular brand of treatment and will instead direct the individual to their GP or pharmacist.

Parents will be provided with information pertaining to head lice treatment, including insecticide lotions, non-insecticidal lotions and wet combing.

The school nurse where requested to do so by the Headteacher/Head of School, will provide advice regarding the correct use of insecticide treatments, such as only using it to treat active infestations, but will advise that a health professional is consulted in the following cases:

- Treatment of asthmatics or sufferers of allergies
- Treatment of pregnant or breastfeeding women
- Treatment of children under six months

Where parents have concerns regarding the use of chemicals, the school nurse will suggest wet combing instead. Parents are responsible for sourcing and applying the treatment for their child. Treatment will not be provided by, or within, any TCAT school. TCAT schools will not recommend the use of essential oils and electronic combs to treat head lice.

Where treatment has been unsuccessful and live lice are still present, parents will seek medical advice about further treatment, ensuring that wet combing is still effectively undertaken every three days. Re-infestation of head lice will be indicated if full-sized adult lice are found whilst wet combing up to seven days after treatment. Where this is the case, parents will seek medical advice regarding the necessary treatment.

## **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 full review date for this policy is 12<sup>th</sup> January 2029.

Signed by:

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Executive Headteacher/CEO

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Board appointed Trustee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_