

Three Counties Academy Trust



Head Lice Policy #HS12

Last amended 22nd December 2025

To be reviewed no later than August 31st 2028

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Common abbreviations and acronyms

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

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

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

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 review date for this policy is 31st August 2028.

Signed by:

_____ Executive Headteacher/CEO

Date: _____

_____ Board appointed Trustee

Date: _____