

Three Counties Academy Trust



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

#SD3

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Policy Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EHCP	Education and Health Care Plan
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child
PEP	Looked After Child
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
TA	Teaching Assistant

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

NB. Staff roles noted within this policy may also include those staff performing that role in an ‘Acting’ capacity.

Statement of intent

Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT) believes that all pupils are entitled to an education that enables them to achieve their best, become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and make a successful transition into adulthood.

This policy outlines the framework TCAT will use in meeting its duties, obligations, and principal equality values in providing an appropriate high-quality education for pupils with SEND.

Through successful implementation of this policy, TCAT aims to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities. TCAT will work with the LA, or equivalent, in ensuring that the following principles underpin this policy:

- The involvement of pupils and their parents in decision-making
- The early identification of pupils' needs and early intervention to support them
- A focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
- Collaboration between education, health, and social care services to provide support
- High-quality provision to meet the needs of pupils with SEND
- Greater choice and control for pupils and their parents over their support
- Successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment

Under the Equality Act 2010, a disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. For the purposes of this policy, a pupil is defined as having SEND if they have:

- A significantly greater difficulty in learning than most others of the same age
- A disability or health condition that prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities used by peers of the same age in mainstream settings
- Special educational provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream settings

TCAT will monitor the Government's programme of SEND reform and any associated changes to legislation, statutory guidance and the SEND Code of Practice. Until such changes formally come into force, TCAT will continue to meet all duties under the existing statutory SEND framework. This policy will be amended where material legislative or statutory guidance changes require it.

Member, Trustee, Local Governor and Staff Summary

Purpose and Principles

- Ensures all pupils with SEND can achieve, participate fully and prepare successfully for adulthood
- Promotes inclusion, equality of opportunity and removal of barriers to learning
- Prioritises early identification, early intervention and partnership working with families and agencies

Governance and Accountability

- Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies ensure statutory SEND duties are met across all schools
- Each school must have a qualified SENCO with sufficient time, resources and support
- School leaders are responsible for ambitious expectations, inclusive practice and compliance with the SEND Code of Practice

Key Responsibilities of Staff

- Teachers remain accountable for the progress and development of pupils with SEND
- Teaching should be high quality, differentiated and focused on access to the full curriculum
- Staff must work with SENCOs, parents and pupils to identify needs and review support
- Staff should remain alert to emerging needs, vulnerabilities and safeguarding concerns

Identification and Assessment

- SEND is identified through ongoing assessment, progress monitoring and professional judgement
- Particular attention is given to pupils making less than expected progress
- Support is planned across the four broad areas of need: communication and interaction, cognition and learning, SEMH, and sensory or physical needs

SEND Support and Provision

- Support follows the graduated Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle

- Decisions are informed by assessment information, pupil views and parental involvement
- Specialist assessments and external agency involvement are used when higher levels of need are identified
- Education, Health and Care needs assessments are considered where progress remains limited despite appropriate support

Safeguarding

- Pupils with SEND may face additional risks including bullying, exploitation, abuse and online harm
- Staff will take into account that SEND can create additional barriers to identifying abuse or neglect
- Close working between safeguarding leads and SENCOs is required when concerns arise

Admissions, Inclusion and Equality

- Pupils with SEND must not be disadvantaged through admission arrangements
- Reasonable adjustments must be made where required
- Pupils with SEND should access school activities alongside their peers wherever possible

Engagement with Families and Pupils

- Parents and pupils are involved in decision-making, planning and review processes
- Communication should be clear, accessible and focused on strengths as well as needs
- Outcomes and provision should be reviewed regularly in partnership with families

EHCPs and Transition

- Annual reviews ensure EHCPs remain accurate and effective
- Transition planning should begin early and support movement between phases of education
- Preparation for adulthood, independence, further education and employment is a key priority

Monitoring and Assurance

- SEND provision, outcomes and records are maintained and reviewed regularly

- Staff training is provided to improve practice and strengthen expertise
- Information about SEND provision is published and updated in line with statutory requirements

Parent Summary

What the Policy Means for Families

- Every child with special educational needs and disabilities should receive the support they need to achieve their potential
- Schools aim to remove barriers to learning and promote inclusion in all aspects of school life
- Parents are recognised as key partners in supporting their child's education

Identifying SEND

- Children's progress is monitored regularly to identify any emerging needs at the earliest opportunity
- Concerns may be raised by parents, teachers, support staff or external professionals
- Assessment focuses on understanding strengths as well as areas where support may be required

Support for Children

- Support is tailored to individual needs and reviewed regularly
- Teachers remain responsible for the progress and development of every pupil, including those with SEND
- Additional interventions, resources or specialist advice may be provided where appropriate
- Support follows an Assess, Plan, Do, Review approach to ensure it remains effective

Working with Parents

- Parents should be involved in decisions about support and provision
- Schools will communicate regularly about progress, outcomes and next steps
- Parent views and knowledge of their child are valued and considered during reviews

Pupil Voice

- Children and young people should be involved in decisions about their learning and support wherever possible
- Their views, wishes and aspirations help shape planned provision and outcomes

Specialist Support and EHCPs

- Where needs are more complex, schools may seek advice from specialist services
- An Education, Health and Care needs assessment may be considered if a child requires support beyond that normally available
- Children with Education, Health and Care Plans receive regular reviews to ensure provision remains appropriate

Inclusion and Equality

- Children with SEND should be able to participate in lessons, activities and school experiences alongside their peers
- Reasonable adjustments are made to support access wherever required
- No child should be treated less favourably because of a disability or additional need

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

- Children with SEND may face additional challenges and vulnerabilities
- Schools work to ensure pupils are safe, listened to and supported
- Concerns about wellbeing, bullying or safety should be raised with the school promptly

Transitions

- Additional support may be provided when children move between classes, schools or phases of education
- Planning aims to reduce anxiety and promote successful transitions

Further Information

- Parents can speak to the class teacher or SENCO if they have concerns about their child
- Each school publishes information about SEND provision and support available
- Families should be kept informed about decisions affecting their child and the support being provided

1. Legal framework

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

- [Local Government Act 1974](#)
- [Disabled Persons \(Services, Consultation and Representation\) Act 1986](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Education Act 1996](#)
- [Education Act 2002](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010 \(Disability\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [The Special Educational Needs \(Personal Budgets\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability \(Amendment\) Regulations 2015](#)
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability \(Detained Persons\) Regulations 2015](#)
- [The UK General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Health and Care Act 2022](#)
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [DfE 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'](#)
- [DfE 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'](#)
- [DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'](#)
- [DfE 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'](#)
- [DfE 'School Admissions Code'](#)
- [DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'](#)
- [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\) \(2015\) 'Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils'](#)

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
- Careers Policy (Secondary)
- Records Management Policy (FI2)
- Data Protection Policy (FI20)
- Admissions Policy Trust Level (2025-2026 and 2026-2027) (GN1)
- Complaint's Policy and Procedures (GN9)
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy (GN18)
- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy (GN19)
- Professional Learning Policy (HR41)
- Accessibility Policy (SD1)
- Accessibility Plan (SD2) (School Specific)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (SG1)
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy (SG4)
- Physical Intervention Policy (SG7)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy (SG21)
- Pupil Confidentiality Policy (SG28)

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. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board and where delegated, Local Governing Bodies are responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently across TCAT
- Ensuring each school meets its duties in relation to supporting pupils with SEND
- Ensuring that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for each school

The CEO in collaboration with Executive Headteachers, Headteachers and Heads of School, is responsible for ensuring each school offers a broad and balanced curriculum, with high-quality teaching and a positive and enriching educational experience for all pupils, including pupils with SEND.

In enacting this policy, Executive Headteachers, Headteachers and where delegated Heads of School will:

- Ensure their schools hold ambitious expectations for all pupils with SEND
- Establish and sustain culture and practices that enable their pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and learn effectively
- Ensure their schools work effectively in partnership with parents, carers, and professionals, to identify the additional needs and SEND of their pupils, providing support and adaptation where appropriate
- Ensure their schools fulfil their statutory duties with regard to the SEND code of practice
- Work with the Trust Board and their Local Governing Bodies to ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as SENCO for each school
- Ensure their SENCOs have sufficient time and resources to carry out their functions
- Provide their SENCOs with sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities
- Ensure their SENCOs have or are completing either the National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination or the National Professional Qualification for Special Educational Needs Coordinators
- Regularly and carefully review the quality of teaching for pupils at risk of underachievement, as a core part of their schools performance management arrangements
- Ensure that procedures and policies for the day-to-day running of their schools do not directly or indirectly discriminate against pupils with SEND

SENCOs, working with Deputy SENCOs and the Trust Assistant SENCO and Inclusion Support Officer will be responsible for:

- Collaborating with the Trust Board, their Local Governing Bodies, the CEO, Executive Headteachers, Headteachers and Heads of School, as part of the SLT, to determine the strategic development of the SEND policy and provision in their schools

- The day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the policy in their schools
- The coordination of specific provision in their schools made to support individual pupils with SEND
- Liaising with the relevant designated teachers for LAC with SEND
- Advising on a graduated approach to providing SEND support within their schools and with other TCAT SENCOs
- Advising on the deployment of their schools delegated budgets and other resources to meet pupils' needs effectively
- Liaising with the parents of pupils with SEND within their schools
- Liaising with early years providers, other schools, educational psychologists, health, and social care professionals, and independent or voluntary bodies, as required
- Being a key point of contact for external agencies, especially the LA and LA support services
- Liaising with the potential future providers of education to ensure that their pupils and parents are informed about their options, and a smooth transition is planned
- Working with the relevant members of the Trust Board, including Local Governing Body level, and the CEO to ensure that TCAT meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, regarding reasonable adjustments and access arrangements
- Ensuring that TCAT keeps the records of all pupils with SEND up to date
- Providing professional guidance to colleagues within their schools and across TCAT, and working closely with staff, parents, and other agencies
- Being familiar with the provision in the Local Offer and being able to work with professionals who are providing a supporting role to their families

Teachers will be responsible for:

- Planning and reviewing support for pupils with SEND on a graduated basis that they teach, in collaboration with parents, their SENCO and, where appropriate, the pupils themselves
- Setting high expectations for every pupil and aiming to teach them the full curriculum, whatever their prior attainment
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving
- Ensuring every pupil with SEND is able to study the full school curriculum
- Being accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class
- Being aware of the needs, outcomes sought, and support provided to any pupils with SEND they are working with
- Understanding and implementing strategies to identify and support vulnerable pupils with the support of the SENCO

- Keeping the relevant figures of authority up to date with any changes in behaviour, academic developments and causes of concern. The relevant figures of authority include their Headteacher or Head of School
- Ensure they work constructively with TAs so that delivery is targeted according to need

3. Objectives

Every school is required to identify and address the SEND of the pupils that they support. Through the implementation of this policy, TCAT and our schools will:

- Use our best endeavours to make sure that pupils with SEND get the support they need to access a broad and balanced curriculum
- Ensure that pupils with SEND engage in activities in school alongside pupils who do not have SEND
- Ensure there is high-quality provision to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, with specific focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
- Fulfil our statutory duties towards pupils with SEND in light of the SEND code of practice
- Promote disability equality and equality of opportunity, fulfilling our duties under the Equality Act 2010 towards individual disabled pupils
- Make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers
- Designate a teacher to be responsible for coordinating SEND provision, i.e., the SENCO in each TCAT school
- Inform parents when we are making special educational provision for their child
- Review, prepare and publish important information about our schools and our implementation of relevant SEND policies, including:
 - Accessibility plans setting out how we plan to increase access to the curriculum and the physical environment for pupils with SEND
 - Information about the admission arrangements for pupils with SEND and the steps taken to prevent them being treated less favourably than others
 - A SEN information report for each TCAT school about the implementation of policy for pupils with SEND

4. Identifying SEND

TCAT recognises that early identification and effective provision improves long-term outcomes for pupils. As part of the overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all pupils, it has a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND as outlined in our SEN Information Report.

With the support of the SLT, classroom teachers will conduct regular progress assessments for all pupils, with the aim of identifying pupils who are making less than expected progress given their age and individual circumstances.

'Less than expected progress' will be characterised by progress which:

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Does not match or better the pupil's previous rate of progress
- Fails to close the attainment gap between them and their peers
- Widens the attainment gap

TCAT plans, manages and reviews SEND provision across the following four broad areas of need:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional, and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs

Each TCAT secondary school will use a range of indicators to identify a pupil's difficulty and plan provision, including before the child arrives at the school:

- Whenever possible, a member of the SEND team will attend Year 5 and/or Year 6 Annual Review Meetings for pupils with EHC Plans
- Admissions information including routine reading and spelling assessments, KS2 test scores (where used) and Year 6 annual reviews are used to inform provision
- The SENCO will be invited to attend the school's Year 6 Open Evenings

Identification of pupils with SEND will be continuous through children's time at any TCAT school. Staff will be expected to remain alert to events that can lead to learning difficulties, such as bereavement or bullying.

Each school will maintain a list of pupils who have been recognised as having SEND. The records will be held centrally and kept securely. In some circumstances the records may be shared with external agencies, for example, for safeguarding issues or on transition to another school.

5. Safeguarding

TCAT recognises that evidence shows pupils with SEND are at a greater risk of abuse and maltreatment, so will ensure that staff are aware that pupils with SEND:

- Have the potential to be disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying
- May face additional risks online, e.g., from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation
- Are at greater risk of abuse, including child-on-child abuse, neglect, and sexual violence and harassment

TCAT recognises that there are additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in this group of pupils. These barriers include, but are not limited to:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the pupil's condition without further exploration
- These pupils being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other pupils
- The potential for pupils with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges

The CEO and Trust Board will ensure that TCAT's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures reflects the fact that these additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse. When using physical intervention and reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving pupils with SEND, staff will have due regard for the procedures outlined in TCAT's Physical Intervention Policy.

Care will be taken by all staff, particularly those who work closely with pupils with SEND, to notice any changes in behaviour or mood, or any injuries, and these indicators will be investigated by the DSL in collaboration with the SENCO.

Staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for pupils with SEND and additional needs.

Local Governing Bodies and Headteachers/Heads of School will ensure that pupils with SEND are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe including online. Each school will ensure that teaching of safeguarding is tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND.

Any reports of abuse involving pupils with SEND will involve close liaison between DSLs and SENCOs.

6. SEND support

TCAT is aware of its statutory duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and recognise that high-quality teaching, which is differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEND.

Teachers at TCAT schools will:

- Set high expectations for every pupil
- Plan stretching work for pupils whose attainment is significantly above the expected standard
- Plan lessons for pupils who have low levels of prior attainment or come from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Use appropriate assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious
- Plan lessons to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving
- Be responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class, including where pupils access support from teaching assistants or specialist staff

Decisions on whether to make special educational provision for pupils will be based upon:

- Discussions between the teacher and SENCO
- Analysis of the pupil's progress – using internal formative and summative assessments, alongside national data, and expectations of progress
- Discussion with the pupil and their parent

Once a pupil has been identified with SEND, TCAT will employ a graduated approach to meeting the pupil's needs. This will be through the adoption of a four-part cycle – **assess, plan, do, review** – whereby earlier decisions and actions are revisited, refined, and revised with a growing understanding of the pupil's needs and of what supports the pupil in making good progress and securing good outcomes. The process is as follows:

- **Assess:** establishing a clear assessment of the pupil's needs

- **Plan:** agreeing the adjustments, interventions, and support to be put in place, as well as the expected impact on progress, development, or behaviour, along with a clear date for review
- **Do:** implementing the agreed interventions and support
- **Review:** analysing the effectiveness of the interventions and their impact on the pupil's progress in line with the agreed review date

A referral for assessment can be made by a member of staff or parent, or a pupil may self-refer. The views and targets of the parent and the pupil will be sought.

The implementation stage will last the duration of a term, and more commonly two terms. Specialist staff and teaching assistants will work closely with classroom teachers to link interventions and classroom teaching.

The school will uphold the review date. If the pupil has achieved the outcomes and the intervention has been successful, the pupil's name will be moved from the SEND register to the monitoring list.

Where the pupil has not achieved the outcomes, the results of the intervention will feed back into the analysis of the pupil's needs and changes to the intervention, or the outcomes will be discussed. The pupil 'assess, plan, do and review' cycle may continue. This will build a history and a better understanding of the pupil's difficulties.

Where higher levels of need are identified, TCAT will access specialised assessments

Where, despite TCAT having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of a pupil, they have not made expected progress, TCAT, in consultation with parents, will consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment.

EAL

TCAT is aware that there may be pupils at any TCAT school for whom English is not their first language and appreciates that having EAL is not equated to having learning difficulties. At the same time, when pupils with EAL make slow progress, it will not be assumed that their language status is the only reason; they may have SEND.

TCAT will consider the pupil within the context of their home, culture and community and look carefully at all aspects of a pupil's performance in different subjects to establish whether the problems they have in the classroom are due to limitations in their command of English or arise from SEND.

7. Early years pupils with SEND

All early years providers are required to have arrangements in place to identify and support children with SEND and to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care. These requirements are set out in the EYFS framework.

TCAT schools with early years provision will ensure all staff who work with young children are alert to emerging difficulties and respond early.

Each school will:

- Ensure that staff listen and understand when parents' express concerns about their child's development, as well as listening to any concerns raised by children themselves
- Monitor and review the progress and development of all children throughout the early years
- Use its best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEND gets the support they need
- Ensure that children with SEND engage in the activities of school alongside children who do not have SEND
- Designate a teacher to be the SENCO
- Provide information for parents on how it supports children with SEND
- Prepare a report on the:
 - Implementation of SEND policy and procedures
 - Arrangements for the admission of children with SEND
 - Steps being taken to prevent children with SEND from being treated less favourably than others
 - Facilities provided to enable access to the school for children with SEND
 - Accessibility plan showing how it plans to improve access over time
- Inform parents when the school makes special educational provision for their child
- Follow a graduated approach to assessing, planning, implementing, and reviewing provision and progress – the 'assess, plan, do, review' cycle

8. Admissions

TCAT will ensure it meets its duties set under the DfE's 'School Admissions Code' by:

- Not refusing admission for a child thought to be potentially disruptive, or likely to exhibit challenging behaviour, on the grounds that the child is first to be assessed for SEND
- Not refusing admission for a child that has named a TCAT school in their EHC plan
- Considering applications from parents of children who have SEND but do not have an EHC plan
- Not refusing admission for a child who has SEND but does not have an EHC plan because TCAT does not feel able to cater for those needs
- Not refusing admission for a child who does not have an EHC plan
- Not discriminating against or disadvantaging applicants with SEND
- Ensuring policies relating to school uniform and trips do not discourage parents of pupils with SEND from applying for a place
- Adopting fair practices and arrangements in accordance with the 'School Admissions Code' for the admission of children without an EHC plan
- Ensuring TCAT's oversubscription arrangements will not disadvantage children with SEND
- Ensuring that tests for selection are accessible to children with SEND, with reasonable adjustments made where necessary

Arrangements for the fair admissions of pupils with SEND are outlined in the Admissions Policy Trust Level and will be published on the TCAT and individual school websites.

Any TCAT school may challenge a decision to name the school in an EHC plan if the school considers that such a placement would be unsuitable based on the child's age, ability, aptitude or SEND; or it would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children or the efficient use of resources. The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments can be made to provide a placement.

9. Examination access arrangements

An examination access arrangement granted in Year 6 will not automatically carry over into Year 7. In KS3, access arrangements may be considered where a need is identified by teachers and/or parents and communicated to the SENCO, provided the relevant examination board criteria are met.

In KS4, pupils with SEND will be formally assessed to determine eligibility for access arrangements in external examinations.

A pupil requiring an access arrangement will not necessarily be placed on the SEND register, nor will they automatically require a targeted support plan.

10. Transition

TCAT is aware of the importance of planning and preparing for the transitions between phases of education and preparation for adult life.

Where pupils have EHC plans, these will be reviewed and amended in sufficient time prior to a pupil moving between key phases of education, to allow for planning for and, where necessary, commissioning of support and provision at the new setting.

11. Involving pupils and parents in decision-making

TCAT is committed to working in partnership with all parents in the best interests of their child and will provide an annual report for all parents on their child's progress.

Where a pupil is receiving SEND support, TCAT will regularly liaise with parents in setting outcomes and reviewing progress. The class teacher, supported by the SENCO, will meet with the parents three times each year at Primary level. At Secondary level, this meeting will be with the school SENCO.

The planning that TCAT implements will help parents and pupils with SEND express their needs, wishes and goals, and will:

- Focus on the pupil as an individual, not allowing their SEND to become a label
- Be easy for pupils and their parents to understand by using clear, ordinary language and images, rather than professional jargon
- Highlight the pupil's strengths and capabilities
- Enable the pupil, and those who know them best, to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future
- Tailor support to the needs of the individual
- Organise assessments to minimise demands on parents
- Bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach

Where the LA provides a pupil with an EHC plan, TCAT will involve the parents and the pupil in discussions about how TCAT and the individual school can best implement the plan's provisions to help the pupil thrive in their education and will discern the expected impact of the provision on the pupil's progress.

Where necessary, TCAT will facilitate support from an advocate to ensure parental views are heard and acknowledged.

12. Funding for SEND support

Where additional pupil needs are identified, TCAT will use its delegated funding allowance to provide early intervention support for the benefit of pupils identified with SEND.

Where pupils with SEND have been receiving early intervention support but are still not making sufficient progress, TCAT will consider accessing high needs top-up funding to provide additional specialist support.

13. EHC needs assessments and plans

TCAT recognises that, despite having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEND of a pupil, some pupils may not make expected levels of progress. In these cases, TCAT will consult with parents and consider requesting an EHC needs assessment.

The purpose of an EHC plan is to make special educational provision to meet the SEND of the pupil, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care and prepare them for adulthood.

As part of the EHC needs assessment, TCAT will meet its duty by:

- Responding to any request for information as part of the EHC needs assessment process within six weeks from the date of the request, unless special exemptions apply as outlined in the SEND code of practice
- Providing the LA with any school-specific information and evidence about the pupil's profile and educational progress
- Gathering any advice received from relevant professionals regarding their education, health and care needs, desired outcomes, and any special education, health and care provision that may be required to meet their identified needs and achieve desired outcomes

If, following the assessment, the LA decides not to issue an EHC plan, TCAT will be provided with written feedback collected during the EHC needs. It will use this information to contribute to the graduated approach and inform how the outcomes sought for the pupil can be achieved through further special educational provision made by TCAT and its partners.

Where the LA decides to issue an EHC plan, it must consult TCAT and the prospective school by sending a copy of the draft plan and consider their comments before deciding whether to name it in the pupil's EHC plan. TCAT will meet its duty to provide views on a draft EHC plan within 15 days.

TCAT will normally admit any pupil that names a TCAT school in an EHC plan and will ensure that all those teaching or working with a pupil named in an EHC plan are aware of the pupil's needs and that arrangements are in place to meet them. In exceptional circumstances a place may be withheld if TCAT believes it cannot meet the needs of a pupil despite making all adjustments possible.

14. Reviewing EHC plans

TCAT will ensure that teachers monitor and review the pupil's progress during the year and conduct a formal review of the EHC plan at least annually.

TCAT will:

- Cooperate with the LA and relevant individuals to ensure an annual review meeting takes place, including convening the meeting on behalf of the LA if requested
- Ensure that the appropriate people are given at least two weeks' notice of the date of the meeting, such as representatives from the LA SEN, social care, and health services
- Seek advice and information about the pupil prior to the annual review meeting from all parties invited, and send any information gathered to all those invited, at least two weeks in advance of the meeting
- Ensure that sufficient arrangements are put in place within TCAT to host the annual review meeting
- Contribute any relevant information and recommendations about the EHC plan to the LA, keeping parents involved at all times
- Lead the review of the EHC plan to create the greatest confidence amongst pupils and their parents
- Prepare and send a report of the meeting to everyone invited within two weeks of the meeting, setting out any recommendations and amendments to the EHC plan

- Clarify to the parents and pupil that they have the right to appeal the decisions made regarding the EHC plan
- Where possible for LAC, combine the annual review with one of the reviews in their care plan, in particular the personal education plan (PEP) element
- Where necessary, provide support from an advocate to ensure the pupil's views are heard and acknowledged
- Where necessary, facilitate support from an advocate to ensure the parent's views are heard and acknowledged
- Review each pupil's EHC plan to ensure that it includes the statutory sections outlined in the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years', labelled separately from one another

If a pupil's needs significantly change, TCAT will request a re-assessment of an EHC plan at least six months after an initial assessment. Thereafter, the Trust Board, CEO, Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or SENCO will request the LA to conduct a re-assessment of a pupil whenever they feel it is necessary.

15. Supporting successful preparation for adulthood

TCAT is aware that being supported towards greater independence and employability can be life-transforming for pupils with SEND. It recognises the importance of starting early, centring on pupil aspirations, interests and needs, and will ensure that pupils are supported at developmentally appropriate levels to make a smooth transition to what they will be doing next, e.g., moving on to higher education.

In our primary settings, the school will:

- Seek to understand the interests, strengths and motivations of pupils and use this as a basis for planning support around them
- Support pupils so that they are included in social groups and develop friendships.
- Ensure that pupils with SEND engage in the activities of the school together with those who do not have SEND, and are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and in any wider community activity
- Engage with secondary schools, as necessary, to help plan for any transitions

In our secondary settings, the school will:

- Ensure that the EHC plan review includes a focus on preparing for adulthood, with additional focus on transition and preparing for adulthood from Year 9 onwards

- Build transition planning into the revised EHC plan to identify appropriate post-16 pathways for higher education and employment, and support preparation for independent living, maintaining good health in adult life and participating in society
- Seek partnerships with employment services, businesses, housing agencies, disability organisations, and arts and sports groups, to help children understand what is available to them as they get older, and what it is possible for them to achieve
- Engage with FE providers as necessary to help plan for any transitions
- Ensure pupils from Year 8 until Year 13 are provided with independent careers guidance

Our secondary provisions will ensure their Careers Policy details how they will fulfil their statutory duties under section 42 of the Education Act 1997 and work with pupils with SEND to ensure they are prepared for the workplace.

16. Managing complaints

TCAT will publish the Complaints Policy and Procedures on the TCAT and individual TCAT school websites.

Following a parent's serious complaint or disagreement about the SEND provision being made for their child, where trust and school procedures have not resolved the complaint, TCAT will contact the LA immediately to seek disagreement resolution advice, regardless of whether an EHC plan is in place.

TCAT is aware of the formal and informal arrangements for resolving disagreements at a local level and will work with the LA in responding to requests for information as part of procedures for:

- Disagreement resolution
- Mediation
- Appeals to the SEND Tribunal

In our primary settings, parents will be made aware that Ofsted can consider complaints relating to whole school SEND early years provision if the problem has not been resolved informally.

TCAT will meet any request to attend a SEND tribunal and explain any departure from our duties and obligations under the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'.

17. Staff training and improving practice

TCAT is committed to the learning and development of all its staff members and training opportunities will be provided and delivered in line with TCAT's Professional Learning Policy.

The school SENCO will assess staff competencies and in collaboration with their Executive Headteacher, Headteachers or Head of School, ensure that CPD provision allows staff to develop their awareness, skills, and practices in identifying, educating, and assessing pupils with SEND.

18. Use of data and record keeping

All information about pupils will be kept in accordance with the TCAT's Records Management Policy and Data Protection Policy.

TCAT's records will:

- Record details of additional or different provision made under SEND support, with accurate information to evidence the SEND support that has been provided over the pupil's time in the school, as well as its impact, e.g., through the use of provision maps
- Include details of SEND, outcomes, action, agreed support, teaching strategies and the involvement of specialists, as part of its standard management information system to monitor the progress, behaviour, and development of all pupils
- Maintain an accurate and up-to-date register of the provision made for pupils with SEND
- Be kept securely so that unauthorised persons do not have access to it, so far as reasonably practicable

TCAT keeps data on the levels and types of need within our schools and makes this available to the LA and Ofsted.

Confidentiality

TCAT will not disclose any EHC plan without the consent of the pupil's parents, except for specified purposes or in the interests of the pupil, such as disclosure:

- To a SEND tribunal when parents appeal, and to the Secretary of State under the Education Act 1996
- On the order of any court for any criminal proceedings
- For the purposes of investigations of maladministration under the Local Government Act 1974

- To enable any authority to perform duties arising from the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, or from the Children Act 1989 relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- To Ofsted inspection teams as part of their inspections of schools and LAs
- To any person in connection with the pupil's application for students with disabilities allowance in advance of taking up a place in HE
- To the Headteacher (or equivalent position) of the setting at which the pupil is intending to start their next phase of education

TCAT will adhere to the Pupil Confidentiality Policy at all times.

19. Publishing information

TCAT will publish information on each school website about the implementation of this policy.

The information published will be updated annually and any changes to the information occurring during the year will be updated as soon as possible.

The SEN Information Report will be prepared by the SENCO for each school in collaboration with the Trust Assistant SENCO and Inclusion Support Officer and will be published on the individual school websites. It will include all the information outlined in paragraphs 6.79 and 6.83 of the 'Special educational needs and disabilities code of practice: 0 to 25 years'.

20. Joint commissioning, planning and delivery

TCAT will work closely with local education, health, and social care services to ensure pupils get the right support.

TCAT will assist the LA in carrying out their statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, by ensuring that services work together where this promotes children and young people's wellbeing or improves the quality of special educational provision (Section 25 of the Children and Families Act 2014).

TCAT will draw on the wide range of local data sets about the likely educational needs of pupils with SEND to forecast future needs, including:

- Population and demographic data
- Prevalence data for different kinds of SEND among children at the national level

- Numbers of local children with EHC plans and their main needs
- The numbers and types of settings locally that work with or educate pupils with SEND
- An analysis of local challenges or sources of health inequalities

TCAT will plan, deliver, and monitor services against how well outcomes have been met, including, but not limited to:

- Improved educational progress and outcomes for pupils with SEND
- Increasing the identification of pupils with SEND prior to school entry

Where pupils with SEND also have a medical condition, their provision will be planned and delivered in coordination with the EHC plan.

SEND support will be adapted and/or replaced depending on its effectiveness in achieving the agreed outcomes.

21. Local offer

The Trust Board and where delegated Local Governing Bodies, will collaborate with and support the LA in developing and reviewing the Local Offer, where necessary and appropriate, to ensure that it is:

- **Collaborative:** Where appropriate, TCAT will work with LAs, parents and pupils in developing and reviewing the Local Offer. TCAT will also cooperate with those providing services
- **Accessible:** TCAT will collaborate with the LA during development and review to ensure that the LA's Local Offer is easy to understand, factual and jargon-free; is structured in a way that relates to pupils' and parents' needs, e.g., by broad age group or type of special educational provision; and is well-signposted and publicised
- **Comprehensive:** TCAT will help to ensure that parents and pupils understand what support can be expected to be available across education, health, and social care from age 0 to 25 and how to access it. TCAT will assist the LA in ensuring that the Local Offer includes eligibility criteria for services, where relevant, and makes it clear where to go for information, advice, and support, as well as how to make complaints about provision or appeal against decisions
- **Up to date:** TCAT will work with the LA to review the Local Offer to ensure that, when parents and pupils access the Local Offer, the information is up to date

TCAT will provide the LA with information about their existing SEND provision and capabilities to support pupils with SEND to aid in the drafting of the Local Offer, where required.

Monitoring and review

Lifespan of Policy: 1 Year

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 31st August 2027.

Date approved by the Board Appointed Trustee: 1st September 2026.

To be ratified and recorded in the minutes at the first Trust Board Meeting after 1st September 2026.

Trust Glossary

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

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

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

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