

Three Counties Academy Trust



Young Carers Policy

#SG16

Last amended 11th August 2026 (v1.0)

Policy lifespan: 3 years. Subject to annual compliance check. Next full review 31st August 2029.

Version history

Date	Version	Details	Actioned by	PDF to Websites	Word to Governor Hub
11.08.26	1.0	Formatted to house style and checked against model for updates	MF	✓	✓

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Trust Glossary

Policy Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DfE	Department for Education
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
LA	Local Authority
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
TA	Teaching Assistant
TCAT	Three Counties Academy Trust
UK GDPR	UK General Data Protection Regulation

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

Statement of intent

At Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT), we take our statutory duty to protect and promote the welfare of all pupils very seriously and aim to provide a community for pupils which keeps them safe, supports their creativity and enables them to meet their full potential.

Our schools are committed to supporting young carers' access to a full education. This policy will be implemented by all staff members in order to ensure young carers at our schools are identified and offered appropriate support to access the education to which they are entitled.

The aim of this policy is to raise awareness among TCAT staff about the needs of young carers and to support them in establishing a TCAT approach to address the issues that may arise within a school setting, in line with TCAT's statutory duty of care to young carers who are pupils at TCAT schools.

Member, Trustee, Local Governor and Staff Summary

Purpose of the Policy

- Ensure young carers are identified early and provided with appropriate support to access education
- Promote awareness of the challenges faced by young carers
- Ensure a consistent Trust-wide approach to supporting young carers

Governance and Leadership Responsibilities

- Maintain inclusive policies and practices that support young carers and their families
- Ensure information about available support is accessible
- Oversee implementation and review of the policy
- Ensure each school provides an inclusive and supportive environment

Understanding Young Carers

- A young carer is a person under 18 who regularly provides care or support to a family member with illness, disability, mental health needs, injury or addiction
- Young carers may provide practical, emotional, personal or household support
- Young carers are recognised as a vulnerable group and may face barriers to educational success

Identification and Early Support

- Identify caring responsibilities during admission and transition processes
- Encourage a welcoming environment where pupils feel able to discuss their circumstances
- Consider referrals to support agencies where additional assessment or support may be required
- Ensure individual plans recognise the needs of young carers

Educational Impact

- Young carers may experience lateness, absence, reduced participation and underachievement
- Schools should maintain high expectations while providing appropriate flexibility and support

- Support may include adapted deadlines, additional pastoral support, homework provision and regular check-ins

Attendance and Inclusion

- Monitor attendance carefully and respond sensitively to circumstances affecting attendance
- Use a flexible and individualised approach when considering sanctions
- Support participation in school life and opportunities beyond the classroom

Behaviour Considerations

- Recognise that caring responsibilities may affect behaviour and wellbeing
- Balance behavioural expectations with understanding of individual circumstances
- Use pastoral interventions wherever appropriate alongside behaviour procedures

Safeguarding Responsibilities

- Recognise that young carers may be at greater risk of neglect, abuse, exploitation or emotional harm
- Report concerns promptly through safeguarding procedures
- Ensure early help and additional support are considered where required
- Work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead when concerns arise

Staff Awareness and Training

- Provide staff training on identifying and supporting young carers
- Maintain awareness of national guidance and local developments
- Promote a child-centred and confidential approach to support
- Ensure pupils understand how and where support can be accessed

Key Assurance Questions

- How effectively are young carers identified across the school community?
- Is support tailored to individual needs and regularly reviewed?
- Are attendance, attainment and wellbeing monitored appropriately?

Parent and Young Carer Summary

Our Commitment to Young Carers

- We are committed to identifying and supporting young carers so they can achieve their full potential
- Young carers should have the same opportunities as other pupils to succeed in education and take part in school life
- We aim to provide a welcoming and understanding environment where young carers feel safe asking for help

Who is a Young Carer?

- A young carer is someone under 18 who provides regular care or support to a family member
- This support may be practical, emotional, personal or household related
- Young carers often balance caring responsibilities with school, friendships and personal wellbeing

How We Identify and Support Young Carers

- We seek to identify young carers as early as possible
- Information shared by families helps us understand the support a pupil may need
- Support plans may be put in place where appropriate
- Additional help can be arranged through the school or external services

Support Available in School

- Regular opportunities to speak with a trusted member of staff
- Pastoral and emotional support
- Flexibility where caring responsibilities affect schoolwork or attendance
- Help to remain engaged in learning, clubs, activities and wider school life
- Access to additional support when circumstances become difficult

Education and Wellbeing

- We recognise that caring responsibilities can affect attendance, learning and emotional wellbeing

- Staff will work with young carers to reduce barriers to learning wherever possible
- High expectations will be maintained alongside appropriate support and understanding

Safeguarding and Safety

- Young carers may sometimes be more vulnerable to harm, neglect or exploitation
- Any safeguarding concerns will be addressed promptly through school safeguarding procedures
- Support will be provided when concerns about wellbeing are identified

Working with Families

- We value open communication between home and school
- Families are encouraged to share information about caring responsibilities where they feel comfortable doing so
- We will work collaboratively with families and support services to secure appropriate support

What Young Carers Can Expect

- To be listened to and treated sensitively
- To have their circumstances understood without judgement
- To receive support that reflects their individual needs
- To be helped to participate fully in education and school life

What Parents and Carers Can Do

- Inform the school if a child has caring responsibilities
- Keep the school updated about significant changes at home
- Contact the school if additional support may be needed
- Work with staff to ensure the best outcomes for the young carer

1. Legal framework

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

- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Education Act 2011](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Carers \(Equal Opportunities\) Act 2004](#)
- [Carers \(Recognition and Services\) Act 1995](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [Care Act 2014](#)
- [The Young Carers \(Needs Assessments\) Regulations 2015](#)
- [DfE 'Improving support for young carers – family focused approaches'](#)
- [DfE 'The lives of young carers in England'](#)
- [DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'](#)
- [NHS \(N.D.\) 'Help for young carers'](#)

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
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy (GN18)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (SG1)
- Attendance Policy (Secondary) (SG29(A))
- Attendance Policy (Primary) (SG29(B))

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 is responsible for:

- Making provision for inclusive policies and practices that support young carers and promote good communication with their families
- Ensuring clear information is published regarding how young carers, and their families can access support
- Overseeing the implementation and review of this policy

The CEO is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy
- Working with Executive Headteachers and Headteachers to ensure that each TCAT school environment is inclusive and accommodating for young carers
- Monitoring and reviewing this policy in collaboration with Executive Headteachers and Headteachers

The Executive Headteachers, Headteachers and Heads of School are responsible for:

- Appointing a Young Carer Lead for their school
- Ensuring that their staff are aware of and adhere to this policy
- Ensuring that their school environment is inclusive and accommodating for young carers

The Young Carer Lead is responsible for:

- Ensuring that young carers have the same access to a full education and career choices as their peers
- Promoting and coordinating the support young carers need
- Liaising with other agencies as appropriate, including adult services
- Ensuring that any existing individual pupil plans recognise pupils' specific needs as a young carer
- Meeting regularly with young carers and liaising with teaching staff regarding their educational development

The DSL is responsible for

- Managing any safeguarding-related concerns in relation to young carers and ensuring they are supported
- Being alert to the specific needs of young carers

3. Definition

A young carer is someone under 18 years of age who provides regular and ongoing care to a family member who, due to a condition, illness, disability, serious injury, mental health condition or addiction, are reliant upon them for support.

A young carer will take on additional responsibilities to those appropriate to their age and development. Young carers may be primary carers, e.g., if caring for a parent, or a secondary carer, e.g., when helping to care for a sibling.

Young carers are recognised by the DfE and TCAT as children who are vulnerable. This is because the level of caregiving and responsibility to the person in need of care is often inappropriate for that child's age and stage of development, and risks jeopardising their emotional or physical wellbeing, educational achievement, and outcomes.

A young carer may undertake some or all of the following:

- Practical tasks
- Physical care
- Personal and intimate care
- Emotional support
- Household management
- Looking after multiple individuals as a result of the primary dependant's condition, e.g., a child taking care of their parent as well as their siblings due to their parent's impairment in doing so
- Interpretation
- Administering medication

4. Identifying young carers

During the school enrolment process for new pupils, TCAT schools will:

- Identify parents or family members who have disabilities or other long-term physical or mental health conditions
- Clarify whether the pupil has caring responsibilities
- Identify whether the young carer has any additional needs that need to be supported, e.g., any SEND or social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs
- Establish individual pupil plans to recognise the child's specific needs as a young carer

Where appropriate, a young carer may be referred to the LA or other support agencies for a needs assessment.

TCAT and our schools will create a welcoming and friendly environment for all pupils, in which young carers feel comfortable to discuss their situation.

TCAT will continuously bear in mind that where a parent has a disability, mental health condition or addiction, the pupil might be the carer whilst showing none of the indicative signs of a young carer.

5. Educational issues faced by young carers

Caring responsibilities can impact on young people's education in a number of different ways including, but not limited to, the following:

- Lateness and non-attendance
- Late or no submission of homework and assignments
- Not participating in extracurricular activities and school events
- Experiencing bullying or isolation
- Underachieving academically
- Poor education or career choices

Where a pupil has been identified as, or is suspected to be, a young carer, teaching staff will liaise with the Young Carer Lead to ensure that the difficulties the pupil's home situation presents are accounted for and accommodated, while still ensuring high expectations and aspirations are held for the pupil in relation to their abilities and circumstances.

Young carers' teachers will decide, on a case-by-case basis and with advice and support from the Young Carer Lead, to offer accommodations to help the pupil get the most out of their education, which include:

- Allowing additional time to complete schoolwork, e.g., extended deadlines
- Monthly catchups with the Young Carer Lead where the pupil can talk about issues they are facing educationally
- Monthly meetings with their Class Teacher/Form Tutor to discuss progress and any additional help that can be offered or brokered
- Additional support to complete work, e.g., through deployment of TA's
- Providing homework clubs to give them a space to complete homework separate from the demands of their home life
- Access to tutoring or 'buddying' programmes

TCAT will be aware that many young carers may be unable to develop friendships outside of school, due to reasons such as being unable to invite friends to their home, restricting the development of a pupil's social skills. Families involving a young carer may be unwilling or unable to attend school functions, leading to them becoming more isolated from the school environment and unaware of issues that the young carer may be experiencing. Some families will be dependent solely on state benefits, affecting their ability to afford proper school clothing and/or extra-curricular activities, such as school trips.

TCAT and our individual schools will ensure that the pupil is offered appropriate pastoral care and emotional support, and teaching staff will aim to ensure that they facilitate, as far as possible, opportunities for the pupil to bond with their classmates during lesson time, e.g., through group and pair work with pupils in the class considered to be kind and welcoming.

During any period of absence, e.g., due to illness, the school will ensure that there are processes in place to check up on the pupil's wellbeing for the duration of this period and will offer any additional support needed, where appropriate.

TCAT and our schools use and evaluate data effectively in order to identify and monitor the progress made by young carers, and reviews plans accordingly. Young carers are provided with opportunities to speak to someone in private regarding their role as a young carer.

Young carers are provided with access to a telephone during breaks and lunches should they require it with a designated and agreed area allocated within each school, allowing them to call home with the intention of reducing any worry they may have about a family member.

TCAT will ensure that the attendance of young carers is monitored, and non-attendance is followed up in line with the Attendance Policy (Secondary or Primary); however, TCAT will take a flexible and case-by-case approach to issuing sanctions for non-attendance in line with the specific young carer's circumstances.

6. Behaviour

TCAT schools will be aware that young carers may exhibit challenging behaviour in environments away from home, including angry or violent behaviour and behaviour which is considered 'immature' or otherwise inappropriate for their age or stage of development.

Instances of poor behaviour by young carers will be dealt with in line with the school Behaviour Policy; however, each school will consider on a case-by-case basis where ongoing pastoral support is more appropriate than sanctions. The Young Carer Lead will work with young carers displaying persistent poor behaviour to discuss additional support that can be offered to help improve their conduct.

Where appropriate, each school will schedule any sanctions implemented for a young carer's behaviour around their duties, e.g., setting lunchtime detentions instead of after-school detentions.

TCAT understands that pupils who are young carers may be particularly vulnerable to the impacts of suspension or exclusion, as the school may be the only escape from caring responsibilities for many young carers. The Executive Headteacher or Headteacher will only issue suspensions or exclusions to young carers as a last resort, in line with TCAT's Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

7. Safeguarding

Young carers may also be more vulnerable to safeguarding concerns than other pupils. Many young carers will experience a degree of neglect of their basic needs, including:

- Physical needs, e.g., food, shelter, and clothing
- Emotional needs, e.g., nurture and stimulation
- Medical needs, e.g., not securing appropriate health care

Young carers may also be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This can be inside the home, e.g., a dependant struggling with an addiction that leads to outbursts of aggression or violence; however, some pupils who are young carers may also be vulnerable to extra-familial harm as a result of the loneliness, lack of emotional support or lack of supervision that can sometimes come with being a young carer. These dangers include, though are by no means limited to:

- Being drawn into abusive or exploitative relationships
- Being susceptible to radicalisation or grooming
- Child-on-child abuse
- Substance misuse and addiction
- Mental ill health
- Physical ill health or impaired development

Where a member of staff thinks a pupil may be caring for a family member without this being officially disclosed to TCAT, they will be expected to bring this to the attention of the Young Carer Lead, or the DSL where they suspect the child may be experiencing harm. TCAT, supported by the DSL, will identify young carers who may be in need of early help, and will follow the early help processes outlined within the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

8. Staff awareness

It is important that staff members can effectively identify young carers and that young carers feel that they can ask for help; therefore, raising awareness among staff and pupils about the issues relating to young carers and what support is available is vital.

In order to ensure that staff members understand the issues faced by young carers, training and ongoing professional development about the matter is provided for staff.

Staff members will keep up to date with national and local developments, legislation and guidance affecting young carers and their families.

The curriculum, primarily PSHE lessons, will be used to promote a full understanding, acceptance of, and respect for, issues such as the work of young carers.

Staff members will not discuss a young carer's personal situation and related arrangements in front of their peers. Staff members will treat young carers in a sensitive and child-centred way that upholds confidentiality.

9. Providing support to families

TCAT offers support to the pupil and their family during the transition process between phases, sharing agreed information with their new school, college, or university where appropriate.

Additional support will be offered to parents in order to remove any communication barriers with them, allowing them to be fully engaged with the education of their child. The school premises are accessible to people with disabilities and/or illnesses, offering additional support to enable them to attend parents' evenings and other school events. Where parents are unable to physically attend parents' evening due to their disability, medical condition or substance abuse, home visits or video conferencing will be considered.

TCAT will continuously promote additional links with adult care agencies which may be able to support families and relieve care responsibilities.

TCAT will discuss and provide advice to parents regarding transport arrangements, where necessary, for those who find it difficult to escort their young children to school.

Monitoring and review

Lifespan of Policy: 3 Years

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 2029.

Date approved by the Board Appointed Trustee: 11th August 2026.

To be ratified and recorded in the minutes at the first Trust Board Meeting after 11th August 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