

Three Counties Academy Trust



Young Carers Policy

#SG16

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Subject to periodic review. To be reviewed no later than 12th March 2029

Version history

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Common abbreviations and acronyms

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

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

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

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.

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 and good practice 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 Executive Headteacher/CEO is responsible for:

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

The Headteachers/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 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/CEO 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

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 12th March 2029.

Signed by:

_____ Executive Headteacher/CEO

Date: _____

_____ Board appointed Trustee

Date: _____