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Home Visit Policy

#SG23

**Last amended 4th September 2025**

**To be reviewed no later than December 31st 2026**

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**Common abbreviations and acronyms**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **AA** | Admissions Authority | **HASH** | Herefordshire Association of Secondary Heads |
| **AAI** | Adrenaline Auto-Injector (Epi Pen) | **HBV** | Honour Based Violence |
| **ACM** | Asbestos Containing Materials | **HR** | Human Resources |
| **AFH** | Academies Financial Handbook | **H&S** | Health and Safety |
| **AHT** | Assistant Headteacher | **HoS** | Head of School |
| **AIR** | Attendance Intervention Reviews | **HSE** | Health and Safety Executive |
| **APIs** | Application Programme Interfaces | **ICO** | Information Commissioners Office |
| **BAME** | Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds | **IHP** | Individual Healthcare Plan |
| **BCP** | Business Continuity Plan | **IRMS** | Information and Records Management Society |
| **BFR** | Budget Forecast Return | **IWF** | Internet Watch Foundation |
| **CAMHS** | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services | **KCSIE** | Keeping Children Safe in Education |
| **CEO** | Chief Executive Officer | **KS1/2/3/4** | Key Stage 1/2/3/4 |
| **CFO** | Chief Financial Officer | **LAC** | Looked After Child |
| **CIF** | Condition Improvement Fund | **LADO** | Local Authority Designated Officer |
| **CIN** | Child in Need | **LGB** | Local Governing Body |
| **CLA** | Children Looked After | **LLC** | Low-Level Concerns |
| **CMIE** | Child Missing in Education | **LSA** | Learning Support Assistants |
| **COO** | Chief Operating Officer | **MASH** | Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub |
| **COSHH** | Control and Substances Hazardous to Health | **MAT** | Multi-Academy Trust |
| **CP** | Child Protection | **MFA** | Multi-Factor Authentication |
| **CPD** | Continuing Professional Development | **MFL** | Modern Foreign Language |
| **CSCS** | Children’s Social Care Services | **NCSC’s** | National Cyber Security Centres |
| **CSE** | Child Sexual Exploitation | **NPQEL** | National Professional Qualification in Executive Leadership |
| **CTIRU** | Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit | **PA** | Persistent Absence |
| **CWD** | Children with Disabilities | **PAN** | Published Admission Number |
| **DBS** | Disclosure and Barring Service | **PECR** | Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations |
| **DDSL** | Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead | **PEP** | Personal Education Plan |
| **DfE** | Department for Education | **PEEP** | Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan |
| **DHT** | Deputy Headteacher | **PEx** | Permanent Exclusion |
| **DSE** | Display Screen Equipment | **PLAC** | Previously Looked After Child |
| **DSL** | Designated Safeguarding Lead | **PP** | Pupil Premium |
| **DPO** | Data Protection Officer | **PSHE** | Personal, Social and Health Education |
| **EAL** | English as an Additional Language | **PSED** | Public Sector Equality Duty |
| **ECT** | Early Career Teacher | **PTFA** | Parent, Teacher and Friends Association |
| **EHA** | Early Help Assessment | **RIDDOR** | Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations |
| **EHCNA** | Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment | **RHE** | Relationships and Health Education |
| **EHCP** | Education, Health and Care Plan | **RSHE** | Relationships, Sex and Health Education |
| **EHE** | Elective Home Education | **SALT** | Speech and Language Therapist |
| **ELSA** | Emotional, Literacy and Support Assistant | **SARC** | Sexual Assault Referral Centre |
| **ESFA** | Education and Skills Funding Agency | **SBM** | School Business Manager |
| **EVC** | Educational Visit Coordinator | **SCCs** | Standard Contractual Clauses |
| **EWO** | Education Welfare and Safeguarding Support Officer | **SDQ** | Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire |
| **EYFS** | Early Years Foundation Stage | **SEMH** | Social, Emotional, and Mental Health |
| **FBV** | Fundamental British Values | **SENCO** | Special Educational Needs Coordinator |
| **FGM** | Female Genital Mutilation | **SEND** | Special Educational Needs and Disabilities |
| **FOI** | Freedom of Information | **SLA’s** | Service Level Agreements |
| **FSM** | Free School Meals | **STEM** | Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths |
| **FTS** | Find a Tender Service | **TA** | Teaching Assistant |
| **GAG** | General Annual Grant | **TCAT** | Three Counties Academy Trust |
| **GDPR** | General Data Protection Regulation | **VSH** | Virtual School Headteacher |
| **GIAS** | Get Information about Schools |  |  |
| **GPA** | Government Procurement Arrangement |  |  |

**Statement of intent**

Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT) firmly believes that regular attendance is essential to the successful academic development of pupils.

The role of the Education Welfare and Safeguarding Support Officer (EWO) is crucial to the overall performance of TCAT and our schools. With this in mind, we have established this policy for home visits.

A large part of the EWO’s time will be spent outside school premises. For this reason, we believe that clear procedures must be in place to avoid misunderstandings or confusion about home visits.

Home visits are a useful way of addressing the problems that lead to poor attendance; however, since the EWO is entering private property, it is important that all parties are made aware of the rules and procedures. Our EWO will maintain the highest professional standards at all times.

This policy sets out how home visits will be conducted in order to ensure:

* Visits always have a clear and legitimate purpose
* Appropriate arrangements are in place for all visits
* The health and safety of staff is prioritised
* Sufficient records are kept
* TCAT and our schools safeguarding procedures are adhered to at all times

Although this policy refers specifically to the EWO, it does apply to any TCAT staff member who performs a home visit.

A copy of this policy will be made available to parents via the Three Counties Academy Trust website and all TCAT school websites.

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

# Legal framework

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

**Legislation**

* Education Act 1996
* Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
* DfE (2025) ‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’
* DfE (2023) ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’
* DfE (2024) ‘Working together to improve school attendance’

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
* Lone Worker Policy (HR17)
* Staff Code of Conduct (HR26)
* Driving at Work Policy (HS9)
* Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (SG1)
* Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy (SG5)
* Physical Intervention Policy (SG7)
* Reporting Low-Level Safeguarding Concerns Policy (SG11)
* 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.

# Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board will be responsible for:

* Ensuring appropriate procedures are in place for home visits
* Ensuring staff conducting home visits have received appropriate training, where necessary
* Ensuring the effective implementation of TCAT’s safeguarding procedures during home visits
* Ensuring appropriate insurance arrangements are in place to cover staff undertaking home visits

The Headteacher/Head of School will be responsible for:

* The overall implementation of this policy within their school
* Approving all home visits other than those arranged by the EWO and ensuring they only take place where necessary and appropriate
* Ensuring staff understand and follow TCAT’s home visit arrangements
* Ensuring the appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place
* Ensuring risk assessments are completed for home visits for staff other than the EWO
* Ensuring staff conducting home visits are provided with relevant background information and circumstances to inform the risks that may be present
* Ensuring visits are integrated into safeguarding, attendance and early help plans where relevant
* Ensuring visits are recorded in the pupil’s safeguarding or attendance file

The EWO will be responsible for:

* The overall implementation of this policy across TCAT
* Ensuring staff understand and follow TCAT’s home visit arrangements
* Ensuring the appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place
* Ensuring risk assessments are completed for home visits that the EWO conducts
* Liaising as requested with staff conducting home visits and providing relevant background information and circumstances to inform the risks that may be present
* Ensuring visits are integrated into safeguarding, attendance and early help plans where relevant
* Ensuring visits are recorded in the pupil’s safeguarding or attendance file

Staff conducting home visits will be responsible for:

* Following this policy for all home visits
* Acting professionally and sensitively, with due regard to all relevant TCAT and school policies and procedures
* Seeking authorisation for all home visits and ensuring the school has all the relevant details of the visit prior to it taking place
* Prioritising their own health and safety during visits
* Seeing and speaking with the pupil concerned during welfare visits, where safe and appropriate
* Keeping detailed, factual records of all visits

# Home visits

Home visits will be undertaken for a number of reasons. This will include, but is not limited to, when:

* Safeguarding concerns require seeing a pupil in their home environment
* Unexplained or unauthorised absence cannot be resolved through other contact methods
* Early help assessments indicate a home visit could provide valuable insight or support
* Attendance is at risk of becoming, or is already, persistently low, and barriers need to be understood and addressed
* Tuition or educational support is being provided at home
* Parents cannot attend meetings at the school due to disability, illness or other valid reasons

In most instances home visits will be conducted by the EWO and will be used proactively to engage with families early, remove attendance barriers, and prevent issues from escalating.

Home visits will be scheduled in advance with the agreement of the parents, unless the visit is due to an emergency or immediate concern, e.g. an unauthorised absence with no contact from parents or a safeguarding issue.

All home visits that are not initiated or attended by the EWO, will require the authorisation of the relevant Headteacher/Head of School, with input from the DSL where appropriate. Home visits will only be authorised where they are deemed necessary and in the best interests of the pupil concerned. An appointment form will be completed before a home visit with necessary details, e.g. the expected time, location, people attending, which will be kept on the pupil file.

Home visits will take place during school hours wherever possible. Home visits outside of school hours will only be authorised if absolutely necessary and there is no reasonable alternative – in such cases, a responsible contact will be established to check on the welfare of staff conducting the visit.

Staff will carry an identity card which is shown upon arrival for a first visit at a home. If the pupil’s parents are not present at the arranged time, staff will wait no longer than 20 minutes. If the pupil’s parents do not arrive, the visit will be cancelled.

Staff will not enter a pupil’s home if they feel unsafe. If a visit is cancelled because of concerns over safety, the reason for cancelling the visit will be communicated in writing to the Headteacher/Head of School or in the case of a visit cancelled by the EWO to the Executive Headteacher/CEO.

If there are potentially dangerous animals in the residence, staff conducting the visit will request that they are kept in a separate room or placed outside for the duration of the visit. If the parent refuses, or is unable to adhere to this request, the visit will be cancelled.

Any issues or incidents during a home visit will be reported to the Headteacher/Head of School or Executive Headteacher/CEO in respect of the EWO.

Where a staff member cannot be contacted or located during or after a home visit, the Headteacher/Head of School will be notified as soon as possible to decide on the appropriate response. The police will be contacted where there is concern for a staff member’s welfare. Where the staff member is the EWO, the Executive Headteacher/CEO will decide on the appropriate response.

# Personal safety

Wherever possible, lone working will be avoided during home visits. At least two staff members will conduct home visits together, unless the Executive Headteacher/CEO in respect of the EWO, or the Headteacher/Head of School for all other staff decides it is safe and appropriate for a home visit to be conducted alone. All lone visits will follow procedures outlined in the Lone Working Policy.

A risk assessment for an instance of lone working will be carried out prior to the commencement of any home visit undertaken by a single staff member, including the EWO, and will be updated in response to any changes in circumstances.

The Executive Headteacher/CEO will satisfy themselves that the EWO is aware of the following before a home visit:

* Confirming the existence of a relevant risk assessment, i.e. the risks and how to minimise them
* The area they will be visiting and any relevant information
* Information on the pupil(s) involved, e.g. medical needs, any aggressive tendencies
* Relevant background information and family circumstances, e.g. aggressive tendencies, cultural sensitivities
* The potential presence of any aggressive pets
* The need to provide details of the visit, e.g. an itinerary with expected departure and arrival times
* The need to always carry identification and a charged mobile phone that is always switched on
* To never enter a home without an appropriate adult present
* To prioritise their health and safety and leave if at any point they feel unsafe or uncomfortable
* The importance of reporting any incidents to the Executive Headteacher/CEO as soon as possible

The Headteacher/Head of School will ensure staff other than the EWO are aware of the following before a home visit:

* The findings of the relevant risk assessment, i.e. the risks and how to minimise them
* The area they will be visiting and any relevant information
* Information on the pupil(s) involved, e.g. medical needs, any aggressive tendencies
* Relevant background information and family circumstances, e.g. aggressive tendencies, cultural sensitivities
* The potential presence of any aggressive pets
* The need to provide details of the visit, e.g. an itinerary with expected departure and arrival times
* The need to always carry identification and a charged mobile phone that is always switched on
* To never enter a home without an appropriate adult present
* To prioritise their health and safety and leave if at any point they feel unsafe or uncomfortable
* The importance of reporting any incidents to the Headteacher/Head of School as soon as possible

A Home Visit Risk Assessment will be conducted by the EWO or by the Headteacher/Head of School as appropriate. If a particular home visit poses new or additional risks, the risk assessment will be updated before the visit.

It is the responsibility of staff conducting home visits to keep themselves safe at all times. Staff will be instructed to avoid any situations that may risk their safety. Before entering the home and once inside, staff will identify possible exit routes and ensure they always have access to escape quickly in the event of an emergency.

Staff conducting home visits will carry a mobile phone, which will remain switched on at all times. The number will be recorded and held by appropriate colleagues including the Headteacher/Head of School or in the case of the EWO the Executive Headteacher/CEO at school. During visits, staff will avoid carrying large amounts of cash or valuable personal possessions. Where a staff member feels uncomfortable or unsafe at any point, they will end the visit immediately. The police will be contacted where there is a threat or use of violence.

Where possible, an agreed colleague will check in by calling a staff member ten minutes into a visit’s scheduled start time. A code word will be established to enable staff to discretely alert that help is needed if required during a phone call or text.

Staff will notify the Headteacher/Head of School or in the case of the EWO the Executive Headteacher/CEO of any changes to the schedule of a home visit, e.g. a delay due to traffic, as soon as possible.

Details of the vehicles used by staff conducting home visits, including make, model, registration number and colour, will be held by the school. Staff driving to and from the home will follow TCAT’s Driving at Work Policy. Where possible, staff will park in a safe and well-lit area with the car facing in the opposite direction of the property.

# Training

Before performing their duties, staff conducting home visits will undergo the appropriate training in strategies for the prevention of violence, and other training deemed relevant by their Headteacher/head of School, e.g. cultural awareness.

Where home visits relate to attendance or safeguarding, staff will receive specific training on using home visits in early help and attendance improvement work. This will be provided by the EWO.

The Headteacher/Head of School may delegate or request a member of staff undertakes a home visit – where a staff member is regularly required to undertake home visits, this will be reflected in their job description, and appropriate training will be provided.

Where possible, at least one staff member in attendance will be specifically trained in home visiting, e.g. the EWO.

# Tutoring

The Headteacher/Head of School will ensure staff, including the EWO, have all necessary information available on pupils receiving tutoring, including any SEND, additional medical needs, and known behavioural issues.

Tutoring will be delivered in an appropriate working environment and with an appropriate adult present in the home. Tutoring will not be delivered in a pupil’s bedroom unless no alternative suitable space is available. The door of a room where tutoring is delivered will always be kept open.

Parents will be made aware of what is expected of them to ensure their child can effectively participate in tutoring, such as providing an appropriate working environment and equipment, and supporting staff where appropriate.

Staff will notify parents where there is any change to the schedule of a tutoring session, e.g. a delay or ending it early.

Incidents of misbehaviour will be managed in line with the individual school’s Behaviour Policy. Sanctions to be issued in the pupil’s home will be agreed with parents in advance, where appropriate. All incidents of misbehaviour will be recorded and reported to the school.

# EWO visits

The EWO when conducting home visits for attendance related issues, will work in partnership with each school’s SLT Attendance Lead and Headteacher/Head of School, the LA’s School Attendance Support Team and any other relevant partners. Home visits for the purpose of attendance support and improvement will be used in line with the Attendance Policy (secondary or primary as appropriate).

Visits will be used to identify barriers to attendance, agree actions with parents and monitor progress.

After a visit, any agreements made between the EWO and parents will be recorded and kept in the pupil’s attendance record and shared with the SLT Attendance Lead. Reminder letters will be sent to the pupil’s parents if the pupil fails to adhere to the agreements made during the home visit. Continued failure to adhere to the agreement will result in a follow-up visit.

If the pupil’s attendance falls below 70 percent over the course of three months, the appropriate authorities will be notified in order for legal proceedings to be considered.

# Child protection and safeguarding

Staff conducting home visits will carry out their work in line with TCAT’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures at all times.

The DSL will normally take part in all home visits that directly involve safeguarding concerns or form part of a statutory child protection process. For other types of home visits, the visiting staff member will immediately inform their DSL if any safeguarding concerns arise during or after the visit. Where there are serious concerns about a pupil’s immediate safety or welfare, staff will contact the police and relevant safeguarding agencies without delay and then inform their DSL as soon as it is safe to do so.

Prior to a staff member being assigned to undertake a home visit, TCAT will ensure the staff member has the appropriate level of DBS check.

The Headteacher/Head of School will ensure staff understand the TCAT Staff Code of Conduct continues to apply during home visits. Staff will never enter a home or stay inside without an appropriate adult present. Staff will not hold conversations with siblings or other children in the home without an appropriate adult present.

Where possible, staff will leave physical intervention for parents to avoid allegations of misconduct. Where staff intervention is required, staff will act in accordance with TCAT’s Physical Intervention Policy. Staff will only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and it will be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Staff will make a record of the incident as soon as reasonably possible and share it with their Headteacher/Head of school in line with policy.

Staff other than the EWO and DSLs conducting home visits will report any safeguarding concerns to their DSL or a deputy as soon as possible. Serious concerns about a pupil’s immediate welfare will be reported to the police and any relevant agencies.

Any allegations made against staff conducting home visits will be dealt with in accordance with TCAT’s Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy or Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

When a home visit forms part of an assessment following a referral, the EWO/DSL will meet with families and carry out home visits as needed to fully understand the pupil’s circumstances. Where appropriate, a social work qualified practice supervisor or manager will undertake joint visits to support the assessment process. These supervisors or managers will continue to meet families and join home visits as needed to review the pupil’s plan, working in partnership to ensure that the help provided is achieving significant, positive change at a pace appropriate for the pupil’s needs.

# Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the published schedule at the front of this document and at any point material changes require it by the Executive Headteacher/CEO in collaboration with the Board appointed Trustee, the Trust Board and Executive and Senior Leadership.

Any changes made to the policy will be amended by the Executive Headteacher/CEO and will be communicated to Executive Leaders, the TCAT Central Team and to Headteachers/Heads of School, who, in turn, will alert school-based staff.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is 31st December 2026.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Signed by: | | | |
|  | Executive Headteacher/CEO | Date: |  |
|  | Board appointed Trustee | Date: |  |