

Three Counties Academy Trust



Home Visit Policy

#SG23

Last amended 14th 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
14.08.26	1.0	Formatted to house style and checked against model for updates	MF	✓	✓

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Policy Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DfE	Department for Education
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
EWOSSO	Education Welfare and Safeguarding Support Officer
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office
LA	Local Authority
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
TCAT	Three Counties Academy Trust
UK GDPR	United Kingdom 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

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 (EWOSSO) 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 EWOSSO'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 EWOSSO is entering private property, it is important that all parties are made aware of the rules and procedures. Our EWOSSO 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 EWOSSO, 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.

Member, Trustee, Local Governor and Staff Summary

Key Principles

- Home visits must always have a clear, legitimate and pupil-focused purpose
- Staff safety, safeguarding and professional conduct are paramount
- Appropriate records, approvals and risk assessments are required

Governance and Leadership Responsibilities

- Ensure robust home visit procedures are in place
- Monitor safeguarding arrangements and staff welfare
- Ensure appropriate training and insurance arrangements are available
- Oversee effective implementation of the policy

When Home Visits May Be Used

- Safeguarding concerns
- Attendance concerns or unexplained absence
- Early help and family support work
- Home tutoring or educational support
- Where parents cannot reasonably attend school meetings

Operational Expectations

- Visits should usually be planned and recorded in advance
- Appropriate authorisation must be obtained
- Staff should carry identification and maintain professional standards
- Visits should be linked to safeguarding, attendance or support plans where appropriate

Personal Safety Requirements

- Risk assessments must inform visit arrangements
- Lone working should be avoided wherever possible
- Staff must prioritise their own safety and leave if concerned
- Emergency communication arrangements should be in place

Training and Safeguarding

- Staff undertaking visits must receive appropriate training
- Safeguarding procedures apply at all times during visits
- Concerns identified during visits must be reported promptly
- Appropriate DBS checks are required for staff undertaking visits

Parent Summary

Why Home Visits May Take Place

- Home visits may be used to support attendance, wellbeing, safeguarding or family support needs
- Visits help schools understand barriers affecting a pupil and identify appropriate support
- Most visits will be arranged in advance unless there is an urgent safeguarding or welfare concern

What Parents Can Expect

- Staff will act professionally and sensitively at all times
- Staff will carry identification when attending a home visit
- Visits will have a clear purpose, and records will be kept where appropriate
- Schools will work collaboratively with families to support positive outcomes for pupils

Safeguarding and Safety

- Safeguarding procedures apply throughout all home visits
- Staff and family safety are important considerations in planning visits
- Concerns about a pupil's welfare will be acted upon in line with safeguarding procedures

Home Tutoring and Attendance Support

- Home visits may be used to support education, attendance improvement or welfare needs
- Parents may be asked to help provide an appropriate environment for home-based learning
- Schools and families will work together to agree actions that support attendance and engagement

Working Together

- Parents should share relevant information that helps schools support their child
- Open communication between home and school is encouraged

- The aim of all home visits is to support pupils, strengthen partnerships and improve outcomes

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:

- [DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'](#)
- [Education Act 1996](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'](#)
- [DfE '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.

2. 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 CEO is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy across TCAT
- Approving all home visits arranged by the EWOSSO and ensuring they only take place where necessary and appropriate
- Ensuring the appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place
- Ensuring risk assessments are completed for home visits by the EWOSSO

Executive Headteachers, Headteachers and 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 EWOSSO 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 EWOSSO
- 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 for visits they have authorised

The EWOSSO will be responsible for:

- Ensuring risk assessments are completed and the CEO notified for home visits that they conduct
- 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 for those visits they have conducted

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

3. 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 EWOSSO 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 EWOSSO, will require the authorisation of the relevant Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or 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.

Where the EWOSSO has scheduled a visit and the CEO has approved the visit, the visit should take place on a day the CEO is present on site. Should the CEO not be present, but a visit be required, the EWOSSO should seek approval from the CFO if they are on site who will be the visit approver. Where neither the CEO or the CFO are on site, and the need for a visit is unavoidable, the relevant Headteacher on site should assume the role of visit approver and respond to any issues arising from 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 Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School or in the case of a visit cancelled by the EWOSSO to the CEO or visit approver.

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 Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School or in respect of the EWOSSO to the CEO or visit approver.

Where a staff member cannot be contacted or located during or after a home visit, the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or 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 EWOSSO, the CEO or visit approver will decide on the appropriate response.

4. Personal safety

Wherever possible, lone working will be avoided during home visits. At least two staff members will conduct home visits together, unless the CEO or visit approver in respect of the EWOSSO, or the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or 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 EWOSSO, and will be updated in response to any changes in circumstances.

The CEO, or in their absence the visit approver will satisfy themselves that the EWOSSO 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 CEO or visit approver as soon as possible

The Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School will ensure staff other than the EWOSSO is 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 Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School as soon as possible

A Home Visit Risk Assessment will be conducted by the EWOSSO or by the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or 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 Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School or in the case of the EWOSSO the CEO or visit approver 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 Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School or in the case of the EWOSSO the CEO or visit approver 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.

5. 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 Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or 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 EWOSSO.

The Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or 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 EWOSSO.

6. Tutoring

The Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School will ensure staff, including the EWOSSO, 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.

7. EWOSSO visits

The EWOSSO when conducting home visits for attendance related issues, will work in partnership with each school's SLT Attendance Lead and Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or 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 EWOSSO, 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.

8. 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 Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or 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 Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School in line with policy.

Staff other than the EWOSSO 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 EWOSSO/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

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: 14th August 2026.

To be ratified and recorded in the minutes at the first Trust Board Meeting after 14th 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