

Three Counties Academy Trust



Staff Drug and Alcohol Policy

#SG30

Last amended 29th 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
29.08.26	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
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
HR	Human Resources
TCAT	Three Counties Academy Trust

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

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

Statement of intent

At Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT), we are committed to promoting a safe, healthy, and productive working environment for all our staff. This policy provides a framework for how we will deal with any problems arising from substance use and misuse.

We have a zero-tolerance approach towards the misuse of drugs and alcohol on the premises and will not take such incidents lightly; however, we recognise that the misuse of drugs and alcohol may indicate a significant health concern and, as such, we aim to support employees in these situations.

This policy has been created to outline staff members' responsibilities in relation to their conduct and use of drugs and alcohol, as well as the disciplinary procedures if this policy is breached.

Member, Trustee, Local Governor and Staff Summary

Purpose of the Policy

- Promote a safe, healthy and productive working environment
- Maintain a zero-tolerance approach to alcohol and drug misuse at work
- Provide support where substance misuse may indicate a health concern

Key Responsibilities

- Trust Board ensures appropriate policies and support arrangements are in place
- CEO and CFO oversee compliance, investigations, support and disciplinary decisions
- School leaders manage day-to-day implementation and staff wellbeing
- Staff must attend work fit to perform duties and report concerns

Staff Expectations

- No alcohol or illegal drugs while undertaking duties, including educational visits
- Staff must not attend work under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Smoking and e-cigarette use are prohibited in accordance with TCAT requirements

Support and Intervention

- Training helps staff identify risks and seek support early
- Occupational Health may be involved where substance misuse affects work
- Confidential support is available where issues are disclosed voluntarily

Disciplinary Action

- Disciplinary action may apply for attending work under the influence, possessing illegal drugs or consuming substances while on duty
- Gross misconduct may result in disciplinary action regardless of support arrangements

Health and Safety

- Trained first aiders respond to medical emergencies
- Threatening or aggressive behaviour linked to alcohol or drugs is treated seriously and police may be contacted

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:

- [Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#)
- [Health Act 2006](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)

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:

- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure (HR3)
- Health and Safety Policy (HS1)
- First-Aid Policy (HS2)
- COSHH Policy (HS7)
- Smoke-Free Policy (ST4)

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. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, "**drug**" is defined as any substance which, when ingested, alters perception and how the body works. This definition includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- All illegal substances
- Alcohol

- Tobacco
- Solvents
- Medicines
- Legal highs

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that effective policies and procedures are in place pertaining to the misuse of alcohol and drugs at any TCAT school
- Ensuring that this policy is maintained and disseminated to all staff
- Ensuring that staff experiencing difficulties with alcohol and/or drugs can access the support they need

The CEO in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for:

- Providing a safe environment for all staff, pupils, and visitors
- Working with Trustees and Governors to ensure compliance with relevant legislation
- Dealing with any alcohol or drug-related issues within the school in collaboration with Headteachers/Heads of School
- Deciding upon any disciplinary action that will take place in line with policy
- Ensuring appropriate support mechanisms are in place to promote staff members' health and wellbeing

Executive Headteachers, Headteachers and where delegated, Heads of School will be responsible for:

- The day-to-day management of this policy
- Providing a safe environment for all staff, pupils, and visitors in their school
- Working with their Local Governors to ensure compliance with relevant legislation
- Dealing with any alcohol or drug-related issues within the school in collaboration with the CEO and CFO
- Ensuring appropriate support mechanisms are in place to promote staff members' health and wellbeing

All staff will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the procedures outlined in this policy
- Taking reasonable care whilst at work, ensuring they do not endanger themselves or others
- Bringing any alcohol or drug-related issues to the attention of the Headteacher/Head of School; this includes in relation to themselves or other staff members
- Ensuring that they report for work and remain in a condition to perform their duties free from the effects of drugs, alcohol or any other substances that may hinder judgement and cause changes in behaviour; this does not include over-the-counter painkillers such as paracetamol and prescription drugs

4. Staff training

Staff members will receive regular training on alcohol and drug-related issues, as well as the support available to them.

Management staff, including the Headteacher/Head of School, will receive regular training in the following areas:

- How to implement and enforce this policy
- How to recognise the signs of alcohol and substance misuse and the effects on the performance, attendance, and health of staff
- How to provide early and non-judgemental intervention for staff who are exhibiting indicators of substance abuse
- How to provide support and assistance to staff where appropriate
- The level of confidentiality with which such matters should be treated

The importance of reporting issues to management will be highlighted in training to encourage staff members to seek help.

Staff members will also receive additional training in response to any current issues.

5. Smoking and the use of e-cigarettes

In line with the Health Act 2006, all TCAT estate is strictly a smoke-free environment; there are no designated areas available anywhere on TCAT premises for smoking.

Staff are not permitted to smoke within a one-mile radius of a TCAT site during school hours and will not smoke in front of pupils or encourage pupils to smoke.

Smoking is not permitted in any personal vehicles on TCAT premises or within a one-mile radius.

Any individual who is witnessed smoking on TCAT premises, or within a one-mile radius during school hours, will be subject to disciplinary sanctions in accordance with TCAT's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

Although TCAT recognises that the use of e-cigarettes has significant potential to reduce tobacco use and the harmful effects of smoking, it is our position that the use of e-cigarettes still poses some safety hazards.

TCAT does not consider the use of e-cigarettes to be professional behaviour and, therefore, staff are not permitted to use e-cigarettes.

Staff members will adhere to all procedures outlined in TCAT's Smoke-Free Policy.

6. Legal drugs and prescribed medicines

TCAT understands that some staff members and volunteers may require medication that has been prescribed by a doctor or other health professional. Staff members and volunteers will notify the Headteacher/Head of School if they are required to take legal drugs or prescribed medicines.

Staff members and volunteers will notify the Headteacher/Head of School of any side effects of medicines; if it is believed the side effects will affect their work, the Headteacher/Head of School will decide whether the staff member or volunteer should return home until they are feeling better.

TCAT will only allow medicines which have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse, or pharmacist, with the exception of over-the-counter painkillers, e.g., paracetamol, which may be taken in moderation. Only the quantities of medicines needed to be taken during their time on site should be carried and stored securely by staff members or volunteers.

Medicines will only be brought on to the premises if it would be detrimental to the staff member or volunteers health not to administer them whilst at work. Medicines will be stored in locked cabinets or equally secure locations which cannot be accessed by pupils.

Staff members and volunteers will not exceed the maximum dosage of any legal drugs or prescribed medicines. Staff members and volunteers will also avoid taking legal drugs and medicines in the presence of pupils.

7. Alcohol and illegal drugs

Staff members are not permitted to consume alcohol or illegal drugs when carrying out their duties; this includes both on and off the premises, e.g., during school trips.

Staff members are instructed that they should not carry out their duties whilst under the influence of alcohol; this includes smelling of alcohol and exhibiting alcohol-related behaviours, e.g., slurring or unsteadiness.

Every member of staff is responsible for regulating their behaviour and is aware that they may be subject to disciplinary action.

Staff members will not be searched for alcohol or drugs unless they refuse to hand over any substance reasonably suspected to be in their possession. Every effort will be made to encourage the staff member to hand over any substance suspected to be in their possession.

Where a staff member refuses to adhere to the above, the substance is believed to be illegal and it is considered appropriate to engage in formal proceedings, the school may search the employee in line with the following:

- The staff member consents to the search
- A second witness will be present
- If a substance that is believed to be illegal is found, it will be sealed in a plastic bag
- A record will be kept of the details of the substance, the date and time it was found, and the name of the second witness
- The police will be informed if it is believed that an illegal substance has been found
- Details of the incident, including the police incident reference number, will be included on the record

Any substances found which are believed to be illegal, will be stored in a secure location before they are handed to the police.

Where the staff member does not consent, no search will be undertaken, and this will be managed in line with TCAT's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

TCAT staff will liaise with the police, and the staff member will be subject to an investigation and any appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with TCAT's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. A full incident report will be completed and submitted to the CEO in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer.

If a staff member has alcohol in their possession, this will not be confiscated, but they will be instructed to store this in a locked cabinet inaccessible to pupils and not retrieve this until the end of the school day, or until they have finished carrying out their duties.

8. Solvents

Staff members are not permitted to bring solvent-based products on to the premises including, but not limited to, aerosol deodorants, compressed air, and aerosol hairspray.

TCAT will ensure that potentially hazardous solvents are stored safely and in line with risk assessments. Further information regarding the monitoring of the effects of the use of solvents or other hazardous substances within the TCAT estate can be found within the TCAT's COSHH Policy.

9. Disciplinary action

Disciplinary action will occur where staff members:

- Enter TCAT premises under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Are found to have illegal drugs in their possession
- Consume alcohol or illegal drugs whilst carrying out their duties

Disciplinary action will be dealt with in accordance with the TCAT's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Once disciplinary action has begun, staff members will be invited to attend a formal meeting with their Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School and for associate staff, the Chief Finance Officer, in order to discover whether an alcohol or drug problem exists.

Where a breach of procedures occurs, but it is established that an alcohol or drug-related problem exists, and the staff member is willing to cooperate with the support offered to them, TCAT may decide not to issue disciplinary action following a discussion with the CEO and CFO.

An exception to the above would be where gross misconduct has occurred, and disciplinary action is necessary regardless of whether they are willing to cooperate with support offered – this decision is at the discretion of the CEO.

Staff who do not comply with the support offered, or continue to misuse alcohol and drugs, will be subject to disciplinary action.

10. Identifying a problem

Misuse of alcohol and drugs which affects performance and behaviour at work, e.g., through serious misconduct or an inability to meet standards of work performance, will not be tolerated.

A formal meeting will be held to discuss the problem, and the Headteacher/Head of School will make a referral to the Occupational Health Service. The Occupational Health Service will be responsible for conducting an assessment of the member of staff, collecting relevant information, and providing a management report. Disciplinary action will not commence until advice is obtained from the Occupational Health Service, unless gross misconduct has occurred. If necessary, suspension arrangements will be followed.

The Occupational Health Service will be responsible for monitoring the member of staff's progress; where there is a lack of progress, the Headteacher/Head of School and for associate staff, the Chief Finance Officer will conduct another review with the staff member to consider whether disciplinary action is necessary and if it is, will consult with the CEO. TCAT will aim to accommodate any recommendations made by the Occupational Health Service, such as where the staff member has been off work, and they require supervision upon their return.

If a member of staff misuses alcohol or drugs after support has been offered to them, TCAT will decide whether a second referral is appropriate, or in cases of gross misconduct, whether disciplinary action should be followed immediately without support.

Should the problems of the member of staff develop to an extent that continuation in their role is impossible, TCAT may identify alternative work arrangements or arrange for dismissal in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. If the problem is directly affecting the staff member's performance, but they do not wish to address it, reject the support offered to them, or fail to cooperate in their referral, disciplinary action will commence immediately.

11. Situations without disciplinary action

TCAT understands that staff members could have a drug or alcohol problem, although it may not directly affect their work performance or behaviour. This could arise where a member of staff confides in another staff member, or the Headteacher/Head of School, Chief Finance Officer or the CEO has identified possible indicators of a problem and may wish to approach the individual, e.g., through a regular absence pattern.

Through regular training, TCAT will highlight the importance of discussion and encourage staff to seek help from their employer or line manager in these situations.

If an employee seeks help with an alcohol or drug-related problem from HR or a member of management staff and wishes to keep this confidential from other staff, this will be respected unless there is a reason to believe that this could put that staff member, their colleagues, pupils, or anyone else at risk. Any staff member who approaches their alcohol or drug-related problem in this way will be strongly encouraged to seek external help, e.g., through the Occupational Health Service.

Where a TCAT school encounters this type of issue, the Headteacher/Head of School will:

- Seek advice from the Occupational Health Service regarding whether, and how, the matter should be dealt with
- Provide support for the member of staff and, if appropriate, arrange for the member of staff to be referred to the Occupational Health Service
- Where a problem exists, allow the Occupational Health Service to establish, monitor and review support for the member of staff

TCAT recognises that the above procedures cannot take place without the cooperation of the staff member. If the staff member does not wish to participate, no further action will be required.

The Headteacher/Head of School or for associate staff, the Chief Finance Officer may provide the staff member with references to external support organisations, should they wish to access them.

If a staff member decides to engage in the support offered by the Occupational Health Service, there will be no further involvement from TCAT, unless the problem begins to affect their work performance. If the problem begins to affect their work performance, disciplinary procedures will be followed as outlined in the appropriate section of this policy.

12. Medical emergencies

In alcohol and drug-related emergencies, trained first aiders will be contacted. A staff member will remain with the casualty until the first aider arrives.

Any other pupils or staff members will be removed from the immediate area, as soon as reasonably practicable.

Following an assessment by the first aider, a decision will be made to ascertain whether an ambulance should be called.

The staff member's immediate family will be contacted to inform them of the incident.

Further information regarding medical emergencies can be sought from the TCAT First Aid Policy and the individual school's procedures.

13. Threatening behaviour

Threatening or aggressive behaviour by staff members under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be taken very seriously.

Where threatening or aggressive behaviour is displayed, TCAT will not hesitate to contact the police. Any staff member displaying threatening or aggressive behaviour will be removed from the premises and later disciplined in line with TCAT's Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

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: 29th August 2026.

To be ratified and recorded in the minutes at the first Trust Board Meeting after 29th 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