

Three Counties Academy Trust



Supporting Pregnant Pupils and School-Age Parents Policy

#SG41

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Subject to periodic amendment. To be reviewed in full no later than 8th 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

Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT) is committed to supporting all its pupils, regardless of their circumstances.

TCAT recognises its responsibilities to ensure high-quality support is available to all pupils as they prepare for later life and, in some cases, becoming parents.

This policy has been created to ensure that school-age parents and pregnant pupils are supported through pregnancy and can continue their education before, during and after childbirth. Whilst this will predominantly mean the policy applies in our secondary settings by virtue of pupil age, it does apply across all TCAT schools including primary.

Whilst TCAT has a duty to ensure pupils' educations are not affected, we also understand we have a significant role to play in safeguarding and helping pupils through what can be a very stressful time.

This policy will be reviewed regularly over the designated shelf-life of the policy. Should any staff members, pupils or parents have any queries or a specific question which is not addressed in this document, please contact the individual school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

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 including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'

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:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (SG1)
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy (SG10)
- Anti-Bullying Policy (SG19)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy (SG21)
- Pupil Confidentiality Policy (SG28)
- Attendance Policy (Secondary) (SG29(A))
- Attendance Policy (Primary) (SG29(B))
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Policy (SG42)

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. Equality

Under the Equality Act 2010, a pregnant person is discriminated against if they are treated unfavourably because of their pregnancy, or because of illness suffered as a result of pregnancy. TCAT is committed to ensuring all people, whether staff members or pupils, can come to school and be treated fairly, regardless of whether or not they are pregnant.

TCAT will not exclude school-age parents or pregnant pupils from any lessons and will not consider asking the pupil to learn at home or in alternative provision. The pupil can request to learn outside of the classroom, e.g., at home, if they wish.

School-aged mothers are entitled to up to 18 weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of their baby. Leave for maternity will be treated like any other leave of absence. The Headteacher/Head of School will act reasonably and grant a sufficient period of leave from school, taking into considerations the specific circumstances of each case.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Reviewing and monitoring this policy

Headteachers/Heads of School, are responsible for:

- Ensuring any pupil that is pregnant, or a school-age parent receives practical and consistent support to allow them to continue their learning
- Making the relevant staff members aware of the terms of this policy and their responsibilities arising from the terms of this document
- Liaising with the school DSL and local careers team to ensure that relevant post-16 options are explored
- Respecting, understanding, and listening to the decisions, wishes and thoughts of pregnant pupils and school-age parents
- Supporting the DSL in finding suitable arrangements to ensure pregnant pupils can be comfortable at school
- Monitoring and maintaining the attendance of pregnant pupils and school-aged parents
- Ensuring TCAT makes all reasonable attempts to support pupils in continuing to access on-site education in line with TCAT's Attendance Policy (Primary/Secondary)

- Determining how much leave to grant for pupils affected by a pregnancy considering the advice of The Executive Headteacher/CEO and the Trust Education Welfare and Safeguarding Support Officer.

DSLs are responsible for:

- Ensuring the day-to-day support for school-aged parents and pregnant pupils is readily available
- Organising pastoral support, counselling, and any mental health support that pregnant pupils will need depending on the circumstances of their pregnancy
- Arranging support to help the pregnant pupil make decisions about their pregnancy, should they desire it
- Making school-aged parents and pregnant pupils aware of any relevant guidance and support that is available to them
- Undertaking risk assessments as soon as a pupil has disclosed their pregnancy to ensure any health and educational risks can be mitigated
- If requested, identifying a suitable female member of staff with whom a pregnant pupil can discuss their support needs
- Keeping up to date with the latest guidance and news from relevant charities to ensure school-age parents and pregnant pupils receive the most recent and relevant guidance possible
- Respecting, understanding, and listening to the decisions, wishes and thoughts of the pupil
- Taking steps to ensure the pupil's wishes, e.g., preferences concerning confidentiality, as a school-age parent or pregnant pupil are adhered to where possible
- Ensuring all relevant teachers understand the pupil's status as a school-age parent or pregnant pupil
- Meeting with the pupil and, if appropriate, their parents to establish any medical history that may affect the pregnancy and making arrangements based on the pupil's medical history
- Where the pupil has SEND, meeting with the SENCO and the pupil's parents to ensure the pupil's needs are met and the appropriate arrangements are in place

School-age parents and pregnant pupils are responsible for:

- Informing the school DSL that they are a school-age parent or are pregnant and intend to continue with their pregnancy as soon as possible, so that TCAT and the school can make appropriate accommodations
- Collaborating with the school DSL and, if necessary, their parents to ensure the proper care can be provided and suitable arrangements made

- Liaising with the Headteacher/Head of School and school DSL, where necessary, to amend their timetable to suit arrangements and appointments
- Expressing any needs, they have which will impact their education or their ability to attend school normally

4. Disclosure of pregnancy

When a staff member discovers that a pupil is pregnant, they will conduct an early help pre-assessment and consider an early help assessment.

The staff member will make sure the pupil receives information about relevant services in the area and advise them how to access the services.

The staff member will explain to the pupil that they can discuss all the options available to them with the school DSL. The DSL will offer a weekly meeting option with either themselves, another allocated person or a staff member of the pupils' choice.

The school DSL will conduct a Pregnant Pupil Risk Assessment to identify specific risks and needs.

TCAT is not obliged to tell the pupil's parents but will encourage the pupil to talk to their parents where appropriate and offer support to ease the process.

Where a pupil requires support to disclose their pregnancy to their parents, we will advise the pupil to:

- Choose an appropriate time and place when the parents are unlikely to be stressed
- Tell the parent they are closest to first
- Have someone with them if they are concerned about how their parents will react – the school can provide someone where necessary
- Practise telling someone else first

TCAT will authorise absences where required to allow the pupil to attend appropriate local services.

If a pupil is considering an abortion or adoption, TCAT will help them to access professional services for appropriate counselling, advice, and support. TCAT will be non-judgemental.

TCAT will offer the pupil the opportunity to speak to professionals and will ensure the pupil has access to pastoral support where necessary.

Where a pupil decides to continue with their pregnancy, the Headteacher/Head of School will be informed so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

A member of staff, typically the school DSL, will take responsibility for the pupil's continuing education.

5. Supporting pregnant pupils

To ensure pregnant pupils can still enjoy a diverse and interesting learning schedule, the Headteacher/Head of School and school DSL will make arrangements to make lessons as accessible as possible – these adjustments include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Modifying the temperature in classrooms to suit the pupil's needs
- Ensuring the pupil has access to fresh air during the school day
- Permitting the pupil to have their mobile phone with them at all times, in case of emergencies
- Offering additional tutoring sessions to ensure the pupil can make good academic progress
- Excusing the pupil from lessons which could expose them to harmful substances, e.g., science experiments and woodwork lessons
- Establishing a quiet and private area for the pregnant pupil to use for comfort breaks – this space will be furnished suitably and offer somewhere for the pupil to sit comfortably
- Allowing the pupil to take regular toilet breaks without explanation
- Adapting activities such as PE and science to ensure they are as accessible as possible to the pupil – if these cannot be adapted, the pupil is given alternative work which they can complete

Pregnant pupils can be anxious about weight gain and may diet or eat less healthily than is appropriate. TCAT will encourage the pupil to eat a well-balanced lunch and encourage the pupil to feel more body positive and accepting of their changing shape. The pupil's uniform rules will be amended to reflect changes to their body.

The school DSL (or allocated staff member) and pregnant pupils will meet once per week to discuss any additional support or arrangements required.

The school DSL (or allocated staff member) and school-age parents will meet once per month to discuss any additional support or arrangements the pupil requires where the parents are together within the setting.

In their weekly meetings with the pupil, the school DSL will offer counselling to ensure there is a clear opportunity to communicate any concerns or anxieties. The school DSL will be aware of national charities and agencies that offer guidance and will assist the pupil with accessing this support where requested.

Appropriate arrangements will be made for any exams the pupil is sitting, e.g., easy access to a restroom, ensuring the room is air conditioned and access to food and water.

Where possible, TCAT will support pregnant pupils by helping them to access appropriate travel arrangements.

TCAT will ensure that pregnant pupils continue to learn for as long as possible until the birth by exploring all opportunities for curriculum support within the LA.

6. Supporting expectant fathers

Although this policy uses the term 'expectant fathers', TCAT will remain aware that the parent who is not pregnant will not always identify as male and may not wish to be referred to with gendered titles such as 'father'. In such instances, we will take every effort to avoid misgendering the non-pregnant parent and will adopt the terminology with which they are comfortable.

When a staff member discovers that a pupil is an expectant father, they will conduct an early help pre-assessment and consider an early help assessment.

TCAT recognises that pupils who are expectant fathers may have additional needs that they require assistance with.

Where both parents attend the school, the school will consider amending timetables where the parents are no longer in a relationship, or difficulties have developed.

Expectant fathers may face emotional distress and anxiety. TCAT will make counselling available and introduce expectant fathers to local services that can support them.

TCAT will facilitate the fathers' participation in ante-natal and post-natal appointments, attending the birth of the child and attending parenting classes.

TCAT is under no obligation to allow the father to take paternity leave; however, we understand the benefits of this and, where the father is actively involved with their baby and the other parent, will allow the father to have a flexible timetable or an authorised absence of up to 10 school days – excluding school holidays and weekends – as determined by the school DSL.

TCAT will ensure that the fathers are given support to cope with and process any and all decisions the pregnant person makes about their pregnancy.

7. Safeguarding

Where there are safeguarding concerns regarding a pupil pregnancy, e.g., if the pregnant pupil is thought to be a victim of sexual abuse or assault, TCAT will work in accordance with the following policies:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

Pupils that have a need arising from sexual assault or abuse will be supported to access specialist NHS support from a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), which can offer confidential and non-judgemental support. In emergency circumstances, TCAT will contact relevant external agencies that are able to offer the pregnant pupil immediate protection and support.

While the school DSL will not pressure the pregnant pupil to provide details about the circumstances of their pregnancy, they will encourage the pupil to be as forthcoming as they feel comfortable with in order to ensure the appropriate support can be offered, and the correct procedures can be followed to support the pupil's wellbeing.

TCAT is aware that possible sexual assault is not the only safeguarding concern when it comes to pupil pregnancy. The pregnant pupil and/or expectant father may face further issues, e.g., those stemming from unsupportive parents, mental illness, and trauma. As the circumstances surrounding pupil pregnancy can often be complex, TCAT will be understanding of the affected pupils' situations and tailor the support offered to the specific circumstances that the pupils are experiencing.

Where the circumstances surrounding a pupil pregnancy are extremely complex and/or TCAT is concerned for the immediate safety of the affected pupils, the school DSL will reach out to the relevant external agencies and/or organisations for advice on how to handle the situation and how to best safeguard the pupils involved.

8. Pregnancies that do not result in parenthood

In all circumstances where a pupil's pregnancy has not resulted in parenthood, the school DSL (or allocated staff member) will not rush pupils back to school; however, if pupils do not return to school within four weeks, alternative learning provision will be made.

Once the pupil has returned to school, regardless of whether this is on a reduced timetable or not, they will meet with the school DSL and pastoral staff at least once per week for counselling sessions, where they will discuss the pupil's readiness for returning to school and the pupil's mindset.

Miscarriage or stillbirth

TCAT understands the trauma attached to miscarrying a child and will respect both parents' right to grieve should this event occur.

Where appropriate and possible the school DSL (or allocated staff member) will, if the pupil suffers a miscarriage, contact the pupil's parents on a regular basis, but at least once per week, to discuss a return to school and the pupil's current mindset.

Under the Equality Act 2010, maternity refers to the period of 26 weeks after the birth – if the pupil's baby is stillborn and the pregnancy lasted for 24 weeks before birth, the pupil will be eligible for 18 weeks away from school.

Should the pupil wish to return to school before this period is over, the school DSL and pastoral leader will meet the pupil to discuss whether a reduced timetable may be a good idea.

Abortion or adoption

Where a pregnant pupil has decided to abort their pregnancy, or have the baby adopted, TCAT will offer pastoral support and counselling where appropriate. TCAT will refrain from giving any judgements or opinions and will put the wellbeing of the pupil first.

TCAT will recognise that while a pregnant pupil may be sure of their choice to abort their pregnancy or have the baby adopted, the decision may be a difficult one that can cause a lot of emotional distress for the pupil. TCAT will ensure that no matter what choice the pregnant pupil makes,

they will be supported in their decision and in navigating their feelings in the aftermath. The school DSL and pastoral leader will direct pupils to organisations and/or mental health professionals who can offer relevant support to pupils, where necessary.

9. Missing school

The school DSL (or allocated staff member) will maintain regular communication with the school-aged parents and, where necessary, their parents to ensure TCAT remains aware of the pupil's schedule, e.g., in relation to ante-natal classes, and to ensure the pupil is receiving the best support in and out of school.

The Headteacher/Head of School, in collaboration with the pupil's subject teachers, will ensure that the pupil is set work that can be completed at home when they are unable to attend lessons – this work will be marked to ensure the pupil receives feedback and allow progress to be monitored.

The Headteacher/Head of School organises home visits, if appropriate, to ensure the pupil can remain on track with their educational progress.

Tutoring sessions will be offered to school-aged and expectant parents to ensure TCAT continues to offer a high standard of education, and to ensure the pupils can make good academic progress.

Where a pupil in Year 11 is likely to miss examination entry and requirements, TCAT will encourage the pupil to consider further education and suitable post-16 provision.

TCAT will allow the pupil time off school to attend baby clinics, immunisation appointments, six-week check-ups, etc. as these are important in developing good parenting skills and ensuring the good health of the baby.

10. Breastfeeding

Young parents are often reluctant to breastfeed for several reasons. Whilst midwives and health visitors will advise the pupil, TCAT will be supportive of arrangements that facilitate breast-feeding by:

- Adjusting the pupil's timetable
- Making suitable facilities available on-site

The school DSL will identify a private area in which the pupil is able to breastfeed, extract milk and store it.

11. Childcare

TCAT does not have a responsibility to provide or fund childcare; however, due to the emotional strain placed on young parents leaving their child in the care of strangers, TCAT will support pupils to help them access appropriate childcare near to the school premises.

Childcare arrangements will be considered as part of the pupil's reintegration plan.

12. Social and emotional support

All school-aged parents will be offered and given emotional support in accordance with TCAT's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

TCAT and all of its staff members take a zero-tolerance approach to bullying – any reports of bullying or teasing directed at a school-aged parent or pregnant pupil will be dealt with in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy.

During the weekly meetings, the school DSL (or allocated staff member) will discuss pupils' emotional and mental wellbeing to decide whether anything more can be done to assist them.

The school DSL and pastoral leader act as points of contact for all expectant parents and school-aged parents and will offer an open-door policy to ensure social and emotional support is readily available.

13. Confidentiality

TCAT will refer to the procedures and guidance set out in its Pupil Confidentiality Policy to ensure consistent and safe practice. TCAT respects pupils' right to handle their pregnancy or status as a parent as they choose.

TCAT staff will remain impartial, unbiased, respectful, and fair in light of pupils' wishes relating to their pregnancy – staff will only offer guidance to inform the pupils' choices.

If necessary, the school DSL and pastoral leader will support the pupil when informing their family of their pregnancy and the decisions they have made surrounding it.

TCAT will always consult the pupil and seek consent before disclosing information regarding their pregnancy or parental status to a third-party, e.g., other pupils or parents; however, staff will ensure it is clear that confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed.

14. Returning to school

TCAT will try to maintain continuity of learning while pupils are on maternity leave; however, school-age mothers are expected to return to full-time education once their maternity period ends.

Before returning to school, the pupil will meet with the school DSL (or allocated staff member) to discuss a phased return to school to allow time to adapt.

A reduced timetable will be flexibly scheduled around the young mother to ensure the pupil can attend appointments.

During their meeting, the school DSL (or allocated staff member) will inform the pupil of the childcare funding they are eligible for.

When the pupil cannot attend school, e.g., if their baby is ill, the Headteacher/Head of School will ensure that work is sent home so that the pupil's education does not suffer.

The school DSL (or allocated staff member) and pastoral leader will meet with school-aged parents at least once per week after they have returned to school to ensure their return has been successful, and to see if there is anything else TCAT can do to make the transition easier.

The meetings between the school DSL (or allocated staff member), pastoral leader and the school-aged parents will continue until the school DSL is satisfied the parents are comfortable at school and ready to discontinue the meetings.

15. Attendance codes

Attendance codes for expectant and school-age parents are as follows:

- Pregnancy is not an illness; however, any illness during pregnancy should be recorded as – I

- Ante-natal appointments – M
- Maternity leave
 - If granted by the headteacher – C
 - If unauthorised – O
- Paternity leave – C
- Where the baby is unwell – C
- Medical appointment for baby – C
- Lack of childcare due to unforeseen circumstances – C
- Failure to organise childcare, or refusal to access childcare place offered – O
- Reduced timetable – C
- Dual registered at another school which they are scheduled to attend - D
- Attending off-site educational activity approved by the school – B

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 8th March 2029.

Signed by:

_____ Executive Headteacher/CEO

Date: _____

_____ Board appointed Trustee

Date: _____