

Three Counties Academy Trust



Guest Speaker Policy

#SG49

Last amended 2nd September 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
02.09.26	1.0	Formatted to house style and checked against model for updates	MF	✓	✓

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Policy Abbreviations and Acronyms

DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DfE	Department for Education
ID	Identification
SMSC	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural
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

Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT) and our schools believe in the use of guest speakers and external agencies to enrich the learning experience of our pupils. All speakers and agencies considered are scrutinised to ensure that they are suitable and do not contradict the ethos of TCAT or our schools, or conflict with the legal framework outlined in the Prevent duty and TCATs wider safeguarding duties.

TCAT fully supports freedom of speech and is aware of the broad range of views and ideas that are needed in the course of a pupil's development. We endeavour to provide pupils with a balanced view of events, ideas and beliefs.

Member, Trustee, Local Governor and Staff Summary

Purpose

- Purpose of the policy is to ensure guest speakers and external organisations enrich pupils' education while remaining consistent with safeguarding duties, the Prevent duty and TCAT's values
- TCAT supports freedom of speech and exposure to a broad range of ideas, while ensuring pupils receive balanced and age-appropriate information
- The policy applies across all TCAT schools and operates alongside safeguarding, Prevent, visitor, data protection and British Values arrangements

Key Governance and Leadership Expectations

- Guest speakers and organisations must be assessed before approval, and senior leaders retain final responsibility for determining suitability
- Background checks, references, risk assessments and consideration of expertise, age appropriateness, health and safety and safeguarding requirements are expected before visits take place
- Speakers must not promote extremism, glorify criminal activity, narrow pupils' views through ideological influence or undermine fundamental British values
- Leaders may request advance information or transcripts and will brief speakers on the school ethos and expectations

Safeguarding Arrangements

- Identification and relevant DBS status must be checked on arrival in line with visitor procedures
- A senior leader or designated member of staff will be present during presentations and may intervene where concerns arise
- Pupils should be able to discuss sensitive issues safely and staff are expected to support informed debate and constructive challenge
- Personal data, recordings and photographs must be managed in accordance with data protection requirements

Balanced Presentation of Views

- Where political or partisan opinions are presented, schools must ensure pupils receive balanced viewpoints through teaching, discussion, presentations, homework or other suitable activities

- Executive Headteachers or Headteachers are responsible for determining whether appropriate balance has been achieved

Culture and Ethos

- TCAT will not tolerate discriminatory, offensive or intolerant language or behaviour directed towards protected groups
- Schools are expected to promote tolerance, respect, inclusion and fundamental British values at all times
- Staff receive training to respond appropriately and proportionately where discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist views arise

Parent Summary

- Our schools sometimes invite guest speakers and external organisations to help enrich pupils' learning and broaden their understanding of the world
- All guest speakers are carefully considered before being invited to ensure that they are appropriate, safe and consistent with the values of Three Counties Academy Trust and its schools
- Guest speakers must not promote extremism, intolerance, discrimination, criminal activity or views that place children at risk
- Schools support freedom of speech and open discussion, but this is balanced with safeguarding responsibilities and the need to protect pupils from harmful or inappropriate influences
- Before a visit takes place, schools consider the suitability, expertise and relevance of the speaker, together with any safeguarding, health and safety and risk assessment requirements
- Visitors are subject to the school's visitor procedures and identity, and safeguarding checks will be completed where required
- A senior member of staff will oversee presentations and activities and will intervene if anything is considered inappropriate or inconsistent with school expectations
- Where political or strongly held opinions are discussed, schools will help pupils explore different viewpoints so that they receive a balanced understanding of the issues
- Schools promote respect, tolerance, inclusion and fundamental British values and do not tolerate offensive, discriminatory or intolerant language
- Any recordings, photographs or personal information linked to a visit will be managed in accordance with data protection requirements
- These arrangements help ensure that guest speakers make a positive contribution to pupils' education while maintaining high standards of safeguarding and wellbeing

Prospective and Confirmed Guest Speaker Summary

Our Approach

- Guest speakers enrich the curriculum and wider pupil experience
- All speakers are assessed to ensure content is appropriate, balanced and aligned with TCAT values

Before a Visit is Confirmed

- The school reviews the suitability of the speaker and organisation
- The purpose of the visit, intended audience and key messages are considered
- Any safeguarding, reputational or educational risks are assessed before approval

What Guest Speakers Can Expect

- Clear expectations are provided before the visit
- Visitors must follow school safeguarding, security and conduct requirements
- Identification may be requested on arrival and visitor procedures must be followed

Safeguarding and Pupil Welfare

- The safety and wellbeing of pupils remain the highest priority
- Presentations must support British Values and avoid extremist, discriminatory or inappropriate content
- Staff retain the right to stop or amend activities if concerns arise
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During the Visit

- Staff maintain appropriate oversight throughout the session
- Questions and discussions are managed to ensure they remain suitable for the audience
- Any concerns arising during the visit are addressed immediately

After the Visit

- Feedback may be gathered to support future decisions on guest speakers
- Any safeguarding or conduct concerns are recorded and managed in line with TCAT procedures

1. Legal framework

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

- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Education Act 2011](#)
- [DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'](#)
- [DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'](#)
- [DfE 'The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation'](#)
- [DfE 'Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools'](#)
- [HM Government Statement 'Prevent Strategy'](#)

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:

- British Values Policy (CU15)
- Lettings Policy (FI7)
- Data Protection Policy (FI20)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (SG1)
- Prevent Duty Policy (SG2)
- Visitor Policy (SG47)

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. Ethos

TCAT and our schools will not tolerate any person who intentionally or unintentionally demeans individuals and groups defined by their ethnicity, race, religion or belief, sexuality, gender, disability, age or lawful working practices.

TCAT and our schools will not tolerate any speech that gives rise to an environment where people experience, or could reasonably fear, harassment, intimidation or violence.

TCAT and our schools do not accept the use of offensive or intolerant language by guest speakers.

TCAT and our schools value freedom of speech and opinion, but will recognise that, in the interest of the whole learning community, this must exist within formal guidelines.

TCAT and our schools recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist beliefs can lead to poorer outcomes for pupils. Our schools will aim to use the power of education to counteract extremism through the promotion of fundamental British values, such as tolerance and freedom of speech.

TCAT and our schools will be sensitive to the fact that pupils may sometimes express views or ideas that are discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist. All members of staff will be trained to deal with these instances appropriately and proportionally.

3. Assessing suitability

According to the Prevent duty, schools have a responsibility to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism; this includes violent and non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism, and can popularise views which terrorists exploit.

TCAT schools will remain a safe space where children can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideologies.

Before inviting an external agency or guest speaker, any TCAT school will conduct background research into the relevant parties, ensuring that:

- Any messages communicated to pupils support fundamental British values
- Any messages communicated to pupils do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism and are not shared by terrorist groups

- The group or person is not attempting to narrow the views of pupils through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion, culture or ideology
- The subject matters being raised are appropriate for the specific age group

All members of staff will actively attempt to strengthen pupils' abilities to engage in informed debate. Our schools will empower pupils to challenge these views in an active and constructive manner.

Careful consideration will be given to the suitability of an external speaker or external organisation to enrich pupil's education, and the Executive Headteacher or Headteacher, in consultation with the Head of School as appropriate, will make the final decision as to the suitability of any guest speaker or external organisation.

The speaker will be briefed before the visit on the school's ethos, the nature of its cohort, how many people will be present for the visit and any issues which should be avoided. The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher will reserve the right to request a transcript from the speaker prior to any speech being made. Any technical arrangements necessary for the speaker will be arranged in advance.

Other than safeguarding issues, there will be several other factors that are considered when evaluating the suitability of a guest speaker or external group. TCAT schools will consider whether:

- The visit adds value to the pupils' learning experiences and education
- The age-appropriateness of the speaker and what is going to be delivered
- The speaker or group has the expertise in the subject they are delivering
- The planned activities meet the health and safety guidelines
- The individual or group has the required DBS checks
- Relevant references have been provided and checked

Before the visit, a full risk assessment will be carried out and submitted to the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher by the staff member responsible for the visit.

4. During the visit

The ID of external speakers will be checked upon arrival, and the school will ensure that the visitor has had the appropriate DBS check or received confirmation that the appropriate checks have been conducted from the speaker's employer, where appropriate. All visits will be handled in line with TCAT's Visitor Policy.

Where the external speaker holds a current DBS check, the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher will use their professional judgement to determine the need for external speakers to be supervised or escorted on school premises.

Guest speakers will be made aware that their speech may be recorded or filmed.

No recordings or videos will be made public unless written permission is granted by the speaker. All personal data will be handled in line with TCAT's Data Protection Policy.

The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher, Head of School where appropriate, or a senior member of staff will be present during the speech or group activity, to oversee that the relevant guidelines are followed.

Intervention will be considered if the member of staff feels it is necessary.

Any reasons for intervention will be recorded for future reference.

TCAT schools will keep a back-up plan to ensure pupils' education is not disrupted in the event a speaker cancels on the day of the visit or fails to attend for any reason.

5. Balanced presentation

Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development at TCAT schools offers a balanced presentation of opposing views. This will remain applicable when a guest speaker is expressing overtly political, e.g. furthering the interests of a political party or seeking changes to the laws of this or another country, or partisan views.

Our schools will ensure a balanced approach through:

- Discussions in class
- Presentations by staff
- Extracurricular activities
- Assigning homework to pupils
- Other methods deemed appropriate by the Headteacher/Head of School

The final decision as to whether the subsequent learning activities carried out after the visits have been balanced will be made by the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher.

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: 2nd September 2026.

To be ratified and recorded in the minutes at the first Trust Board Meeting after 2nd September 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