

Three Counties Academy Trust



Risk Assessment Policy

#SG8

Last amended 5th 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
05.08.26	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
DfE	Department for Education
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
EHC	Education and Health Care (Plan)
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
LA	Local Authority
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
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

At Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT), we are committed to providing a safe environment for all members of our community. This policy sets out the procedures our schools will follow to identify and manage risks to the health and safety of staff members, pupils, and visitors.

Member, Trustee, Local Governor and Staff Summary

Purpose of the Policy

- Risk assessment is a fundamental part of maintaining a safe environment for pupils, staff, visitors and contractors
- The policy establishes a consistent Trust-wide approach to identifying hazards, assessing risks and implementing appropriate control measures
- It supports compliance with health and safety legislation and promotes proactive management of risk
- Risk assessment forms part of wider organisational decision-making and operational management

A Whole-Trust Approach to Risk Management

- Risk management is everyone's responsibility
- TCAT seeks to identify risks early and reduce the likelihood of harm
- Risk assessments support safer learning and working environments
- Risk management is an ongoing process of monitoring and improvement

Governance and Accountability

- The Trust Board retains overall responsibility for risk management and health and safety
- The CEO is responsible for ensuring effective Trust-wide systems are in place
- School leaders implement arrangements within their schools
- Staff contribute through awareness, cooperation and reporting concerns
- Significant findings and major risks are escalated through appropriate leadership channels

Key Areas of Risk

- Safeguarding
- Pupil welfare
- Health and safety

- Security
- Fire safety
- Critical incidents
- Educational visits and school trips
- Teaching activities and practical lessons
- Staff recruitment

Protecting People

- Risk assessments consider all individuals who may be affected
- Particular attention is given to those who may require additional support
- Control measures should promote safe and inclusive environments

Managing and Reducing Risk

- Risks are evaluated according to likelihood and impact
- TCAT applies a consistent risk rating approach
- Low risks are monitored
- Moderate risks require action to reduce exposure
- High risks require immediate intervention and additional control measures

Principles of Effective Risk Management

- Avoid risks where possible
- Address hazards at their source
- Consult with those affected
- Apply professional advice where necessary
- Promote a positive health and safety culture

Reviewing Risk and Learning from Experience

- Risk assessments are reviewed when circumstances change
- Reviews follow accidents, near misses and significant changes
- Higher-risk activities receive enhanced scrutiny
- Review findings support continuous improvement

Training and Awareness

- Staff receive regular risk management training
- Additional training is provided where specialist responsibilities exist
- New staff receive risk management information as part of induction

Staff Responsible for Completing Risk Assessments Summary

Your Role

- Complete risk assessments when authorised and trained to do so
- Identify hazards that could cause harm to pupils, staff, visitors or others
- Ensure risks are assessed honestly and proportionately
- Implement and follow agreed control measures

Identifying Hazards

- Consider activities, environments, equipment and working practices
- Focus on hazards that could cause significant harm or affect multiple people
- Consult colleagues and others affected where appropriate
- Think about risks both on and off site

Who Might Be Harmed

- Consider staff, pupils, visitors, contractors and other users of the site
- Give additional consideration to vulnerable groups including those with disabilities, SEND, medical needs, pregnancy or lone working arrangements
- Consider safeguarding and wellbeing needs where relevant

Evaluating Risk

- Assess both the likelihood and impact of harm occurring
- Consider existing controls before deciding whether further action is required
- Ensure controls are realistic, achievable and effective
- Seek advice from leaders or the Health and Safety Lead when required

Recording Findings

- Record significant hazards and control measures clearly
- Ensure assessments identify who may be affected
- Keep records accurate and up to date
- Maintain confidentiality where assessments contain personal information

Reporting and Escalation

- Report newly identified risks promptly
- Raise concerns where existing controls are ineffective
- Inform leaders of significant findings requiring resources or management action
- Report defects, hazards or changing circumstances without delay

Reviewing Assessments

- Review assessments when activities, environments or people change
- Review following accidents or near misses
- Update assessments when guidance, legislation or good practice changes
- Ensure reviews are recorded appropriately

Professional Expectations

- Undertake risk assessment duties in line with training received
- Cooperate with TCAT policies and health and safety arrangements
- Prioritise the safety of pupils, colleagues and visitors
- Participate in ongoing training and development related to risk management

1. Legal framework

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

- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
- [Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 \(RIDDOR\)](#)
- [DfE 'Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools'](#)

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 and documents:

- Fire Safety Risk Assessment
- Risk Assessment Review Tracker
- Records Management Policy (FI2)
- Health and Safety Policy (HS1)
- MAT Asbestos Management Policy (HS10)
- MAT Fire Safety Policy (HS11)
- Legionella Health and Safety Policy (HS13)

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 and, where delegated, Local Governing Bodies will be responsible for:

- The overall responsibility of risk management at TCAT and our schools
- Overseeing the management of risk and health and safety
- Delegating strategic decisions for operational management of risk and health and safety to the CEO
- Ensuring the relevant incidents and injuries are recorded and reported in line with RIDDOR

The CEO working with the CFO and Central Team will be responsible for:

- Appointing a competent Health and Safety Lead to ensure TCAT meets our health and safety duties
- Ensuring there is an effective approach to risk management across TCAT
- Ensuring that any individual tasked to carry out a risk assessment is suitably trained to do so
- Allocating resources in response to risk assessments and determining a course of action, if it has been identified that a risk cannot be suitably controlled so far as is reasonably practicable
- Implementing frameworks for decision-making and corporate strategies which consider risk assessment principles
- Implementing appropriate mechanisms to communicate safe systems of work identified as part of the risk assessment process
- Communicating elements of risk and health and safety management to the Trust Board
- Developing a Health and Safety Policy, subject to reviews based on thorough risk assessment to reflect on and reduce occurrences of newly established risks
- Recording any significant findings from risk assessments

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

- Collaborate with the competent Health and Safety Lead to ensure TCAT meets our health and safety duties within their school
- Ensuring there is an effective approach to risk management across their school in line with TCAT policies and procedures
- Ensuring that any individual within their school tasked to carry out a risk assessment is suitably trained and authorised to do so
- Allocating resources within their school in response to risk assessments and determining a course of action, if it has been identified that a risk cannot be suitably controlled so far as is reasonably practicable

- Implementing TCAT's frameworks for decision-making and which consider risk assessment principles
- Implementing appropriate mechanisms to communicate safe systems of work identified as part of the risk assessment process within their school
- Communicating elements of risk and health and safety management to their Local Governing Body
- Following TCAT's Health and Safety Policy
- Recording any significant findings from risk assessments

The Health and Safety Lead will be responsible for:

- Developing and implementing an effective approach to risk management across TCAT and within individual schools
- Reporting to the Trust Executive Leadership Team and Trust Board, as required

All staff will be responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of their own safety, as well as that of pupils, visitors, and other staff members
- Being aware of any established risks and understanding the measures TCAT and their school has put in place to manage these
- Undertaking their work in accordance with training and instructions
- Cooperating with TCAT and our schools on health and safety matters
- Carrying out assigned risk assessments effectively, ensuring all risks are identified as well as suitable control measures
- Reporting any risks or defects to their Headteacher or Head of School, the Health and Safety Lead or the CEO as appropriate in order to create new, or update risk assessments
- Participating in risk management training delivered by TCAT

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

- **“Risk assessment”** is defined as a careful examination of what, in a school, could cause harm to people, so that TCAT and the school can determine whether the necessary precautions are in place or whether more should be done to prevent harm
- **“Hazard”** is defined as anything that may cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, an open drawer, etc

- **“Risk”** is defined as the chance, low to high, that someone could be harmed by a hazard, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be
- **“Dynamic risk assessment”** is defined as an assessment that takes into account unexpected or short, temporary changes that require immediate amendments to be made to control measures
- **“Generic risk assessment”** is defined as an individual assessment covering the common, significant hazards that staff and others face on a daily basis, such as low-risk activities or repeated activities that can be documented in another way
- **“Suitable and sufficient risk”** is defined as an assessment that is proportionate to the risk and ensures that all relevant hazards are addressed, complies with statutory requirements, ensures all groups who are affected are considered, takes account of existing control measures, and identifies further measures as necessary

4. Areas of risk

TCAT and our schools identify key areas that present risks to the TCAT community – these include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Safeguarding
- Pupil welfare
- Health and safety
- Security
- Fire safety
- Critical incidents
- Educational visits and school trips
- Teaching activities and practical lessons
- Staff recruitment

Specific risk assessments by industry professionals with relevant professional qualifications and knowledge are also conducted under the following categories:

- Asbestos
- Legionella
- Gas safety

- Electrical safety
- Fire safety

5. Risk ratings

TCAT adopts the following risk ratings to determine the impact and severity of different hazards:

Likelihood	Impact			
	1 – Minor	2 – Moderate	3 – Major	4 – Catastrophic
1 – Unlikely	2	3	4	5
2 – Rare	3	4	5	6
3 – Possible	4	5	6	7
4 – Likely	5	6	7	8

In line with the above point, the Trust has identified the following risk actions depending on the determined risk rating:

Degree of risk	Risk treatment
Low	• Acceptable level of risk • Risks should be monitored and reassessed at appropriate intervals • No further action or additional controls should be necessary
Moderate	• Unacceptable level of risk

	• Efforts should be made to reduce risk • Establish more precisely the likelihood of harm as a basis for determining the need for improved control measures • Resources may need to be allocated to reduce the risk • Where the risk involves work in progress, immediate action should be taken
High	• Unacceptable level of risk • Immediate action must be taken to manage the risk • Control measures must be put into place which significantly reduce the impact of the event or the likelihood of it occurring • A significant number of control measures are required • Resources will need to be allocated to reduce the risk

When completing risk assessments, staff members will grade impact and likelihood using the above scale systems and respond appropriately in line with the above rating.

6. Principles of effective risk management and assessment

TCAT follows the following key principles of risk prevention:

- If possible, avoid a risk altogether
- Avoid introducing new hazards
- Evaluate unavoidable risks via a risk assessment
- Combat risks at the source

- Consult with those affected to adapt work to the requirements of the individuals
- Consult with the Health and Safety Lead
- Take advantage of technological and technical progress where appropriate
- Implement risk prevention measures within policies
- Give priority to protection measures that safeguard TCAT and our schools
- Ensure that staff and pupils understand what they must do to minimise risk
- Develop a positive approach to health and safety within TCAT and our schools

TCAT will use a five-stage process to undertake a risk assessment:

- Identify the hazards
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks
- Record the findings
- Review

Hazards that are already covered under other risk assessments will be ticked as 'checked' in the general risk assessment. There will then be no need to conduct a separate risk assessment unless the risk changes.

7. Hazard identification

When identifying hazards, staff members will:

- Consider what could reasonably be expected to cause harm – this could include anything related to the school premises or the delivery of its curriculum, whether on- or off-site
- Consider potential risks from the perspective of other staff, visitors, and pupils, including consulting these groups where necessary
- Give priority focus to significant hazards that could result in serious harm or affect several people

To identify hazards, staff members will have regard to factors including, but not limited to, the following:

- The environment, e.g., poor lighting or low/high temperature
- Slipping and tripping hazards, e.g., poorly maintained floors or stairs
- Fire, e.g., from flammable materials
- Chemicals and how they are used, and in what quantities, e.g., cleaning chemicals
- Moving parts of machinery, e.g., within faculty workshops
- On-site vehicle movements
- Asbestos on TCAT premises
- Selection and management of contractors
- Work at height, e.g., scaffolding around buildings
- Ejection of materials, e.g., workshops and experiments
- Pressure systems, e.g., within laboratories
- Electricity, e.g., poor wiring, portable appliances, electrical experiments
- Dust, e.g., metal grinding and cement
- Fumes, e.g., welding and chemicals
- Manual handling
- Noise
- Extreme weather and other meteorological factors
- Building design and maintenance
- Biological hazards, e.g., gardening or contact with bodily fluids
- Management of work-related stress
- Behaviour management, e.g., kicking, hitting and verbal abuse

8. Individuals at risk of harm

In addition to staff and pupils, those conducting a risk assessment will also consider individuals and groups who may not be in the workplace consistently.

Staff will have regard to the following groups of people:

- Staff members
- Operators
- Maintenance personnel
- Cleaners
- Contractors
- Parents
- Pupils
- Visitors

Staff will also have due regard to the following groups:

- Staff and pupils with disabilities
- Pupils with SEND
- Inexperienced staff
- Lone workers
- Pregnant workers
- Staff and pupils with mental health needs
- Other vulnerable pupils, including those with safeguarding considerations
- Other groups which could be particularly at risk depending on the nature of the hazard

9. Evaluating risks

Staff will evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done in line with the 'Risk rating' section of this policy.

For each significant hazard, staff will decide whether the residual risk is high, moderate, or low.

Staff will consider whether industry standards are in place and whether all has been done that is reasonably practicable to keep the workplace safe.

Staff will ensure that managing additional hazards does not interfere with other control measures, such as fire safety.

Staff will ensure that the following are in place:

- Adequate information, instruction, or training
- Adequate systems or procedures

When implementing control measures, staff will have due regard to whether the precautions:

- Meet the standards set by a legal requirement
- Comply with the recognised industry standard
- Represent good practice
- Change existing precautions in place

To reduce risks as far as reasonably practicable, staff will aim to eradicate the hazard completely or control the risk significantly to ensure that harm can be deemed unlikely, or the likelihood of harm occurring is sufficiently minimised.

10. Recording findings

Staff will ensure that significant hazards are recorded, as well as the control measures in place to mitigate those hazards, and the expected outcomes following the implementation of the control measures.

Up-to-date copies of risk assessments will be lodged in the Trust Finance Office, in line with TCAT's Records Management Policy.

Where a risk assessment includes personal details about an individual, e.g., personal health information, TCAT will ensure that the risk assessment maintains that individual's confidentiality and will therefore only share the details of the assessment where necessary.

Staff will not be required to show how the assessment was carried out, provided that:

- A proper check was made
- The assessment details who might be affected
- All the obvious, significant hazards are considered, taking into account the number of people who could be involved

- The precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risks are low

All findings will be reported to the CEO and the Chief Finance Officer. Where the impact or likelihood of major risks cannot be minimised, the CEO will decide whether the activity will still take place in collaboration with the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or where delegated, the Head of School.

11. Reviewing

Any concerns from staff regarding the control measures implemented following a risk assessment will be discussed with line managers and trade union representatives in the first instance, in order to try and reach a collaborative solution. Concerns will be taken to HSE if further escalation is needed.

Risk assessments will be reviewed in line with the TCAT's Risk Assessment Review Tracker. TCAT implements the following requirements for when risk assessments will be reviewed:

- When there are changes to an activity
- After a near-miss or accident
- When there are changes to the type of people involved in the activity
- When there are changes to good practice
- When there are changes to related legislation
- Annually, if for no other reason

Reviews of risk assessments will be dynamic, as necessary.

A new risk assessment will not be conducted unless there are significant changes relevant to the activity in question.

Risk assessments developed for high-risk activities will be reviewed on a termly basis by the individual who created the risk assessment and the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or where delegated, the Head of School.

All reviews will be recorded on the Risk Assessment Review Tracker. Changes will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders immediately.

Risk assessments will be stored for the duration of the risk assessment, plus three years, in line with TCAT's Records Management Policy.

12. Training

All staff members will receive bi-annual training on basic risk management procedures. Staff members with a responsibility for creating and completing risk assessments will receive in-depth training on risk management on an annual basis, in addition to the basic risk management training offered. All new staff members will receive training on risk management and will be required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction training.

Staff whose work involves a greater element of risk will have extra or specific training, including:

- Using industrial machinery
- Managing asbestos
- Having responsibility for the storage of, and accountability for, potentially hazardous materials in their buildings

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: 5th August 2026.

To be ratified and recorded in the minutes at the first Trust Board Meeting after 5th 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