

Three Counties Academy Trust



Key Holder Policy

#ST5

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Subject to annual amendment. To be reviewed in full no later than 22nd February 2027

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) understands that it is important to maintain a high level of security at our schools and, as such, access to TCAT buildings and grounds is limited to a certain number of authorised staff who are identified key holders. This policy is designed to ensure that all staff at our schools are aware of the authorised key holders, and to provide clear guidelines of practice for the key holders, including on the operation of alarm systems.

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 and non-statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- DfE 'Controlling access to school premises'
- DfE 'School and college security'
- DfE 'Site security guidance'
- DfE 'Good estate management 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:

- Security Risk Assessments
- Lettings Policy (FI7)
- Surveillance and CCTV Policy (FI21)
- Lone Worker Policy (HR17)
- Staff Code of Conduct (HR26)
- Health and Safety Policy (HS1)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (SG1)
- Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy (SG33)
- Trust and School Security Policy (SG34)
- Premises Management Policy (ST6)

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 Estate Manager is responsible for:

- Maintaining a key deposit record
- Holding securely all TCAT estate keys not allocated to a designated key holder
- Overseeing the process for deposits
- Providing key holders with a receipt for their key deposit
- Providing new, duplicate or replacement keys as and when necessary
- Ensuring that only appropriate and suitable individuals are designated as key holders, and that any risks are managed
- Ensuring that the procedures in this policy are adhered to at all times
- Maintaining and utilising a Key Holder Log Book
- Providing training to key holders on the correct security procedures for the school premises, and how to respond to any incidents
- Liaising with designated key holders, the Chief Finance Officer and the Headteacher/Head of School where necessary

Key holders are responsible for:

- Adhering to the procedures outlined in this policy
- Maintaining responsibility for the keys issued to them
- Reporting loss or theft of keys to the Trust Estate Manager
- Returning keys to the Trust Estate Manager when they are no longer needed

3. Designated key holders

The Trust Estate Manager in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Headteacher/Head of School will designate key holders, with consideration given to their role, their need to access the site, proximity to the school and their suitability and experience.

The Trust Estate Manager will issue all keys to authorised individuals and will keep a record of this using the Key Holder Log Book. The key holder will sign the Key Holder Log Book to agree that they are responsible for the key in their possession. The Key Holder Log Book will be shared with the individual TCAT school's security alarm company.

The key holder will be made aware of what is expected of them, including attending the school outside of school hours, in line with their specific responsibilities as stipulated in their contract. The Trust Estate Manager will provide training to key holders on the correct procedures for opening and closing the premises, setting and resetting the security system, and how to respond to any incidents.

Temporary key holders may be identified at the discretion of the Trust Estate Manager and will adhere to the guidelines outlined in this policy.

4. Security

All unallocated keys are stored in a locked cabinet in the Trust Central Offices; only the Trust Estate Manager and Chief Finance Officer has access to this cabinet. All keys have a fob attached containing their identification number and key holders maintain full responsibility for any key in their possession.

The Trust Estate Manager will keep a record of each key in the locked cabinet in the Trust Central Offices – this is the only record that is permitted.

The Trust Estate Manager will review the needs of each authorised person regularly to ensure that the key holder still needs access to the key. If access is no longer needed, the Trust Estate Manager may decide to recall the key.

Key holders will ensure that they organise appropriate cover at least 24 hours in advance by contacting the Trust Estate Manager if they cannot attend the school for any reason to fulfil their responsibilities.

Key holders will not copy a key or lend the key to any other individual. Key holders will not change any locks in the school.

Any key holder who is found to have lent a key to another individual, copied a key, or changed any locks within the school, may be subject to a charge to replace keys or to cover the cost of changing locks and may face disciplinary action in line with TCATs Staff Code of Conduct.

Key holders will report any lost keys to the Trust Estate Manager immediately, who will then assess the level of security risk and respond accordingly, e.g. by changing locks. Key holders may be subject to a charge to cover the full cost of the replacement of a key following loss or theft; the Chief Finance Officer will determine what is appropriate given the circumstances.

All key holders will have a mobile phone in their possession when attending the school premises to allow them to contact the security alarm company, other key holders, and emergency services as appropriate.

5. Temporary key holders

At the discretion of the Trust Estate Manager, it may be decided that a temporary key holder is necessary to maintain the security of the school, such as a member of staff other than those identified in this policy.

The Trust Estate Manager will assess the risk of the individual to ensure they are responsible enough to undertake a key holder role before providing them with authorised use of the key.

The Trust Estate Manager will record the name of the temporary key holder, as well as the start and end date of their authorisation, in the Key Holder Log Book.

The temporary key holder will sign the entry in the Key Holder Log Book, recognising responsibility for the key in their possession.

The temporary key holder is required to return the key to the Trust Estate Manager by the specified termination date of their authorised use and will sign the Key Holder Log Book to indicate this has been returned.

6. Alarms

The Trust Estate Manager will provide key holders who need out-of-hours access to the school premises with the codes to the alarms installed within the school.

The Trust Estate Manager will keep a record of all named employees who have access to the alarms and are aware of the codes. Key holders will be instructed not to pass on this information to any other individual – breaches of this will be handled in line with TCATs Staff Code of Conduct.

Key holders will adhere to the following process when setting the alarm:

- Ascertain that there is nothing in close proximity which is likely to activate the system or block the effectiveness of the system
- Check that they have all necessary equipment to re-enter the premises and re-set the alarm if required, e.g. keys, security ID pass, etc.

- Ensure that they are able to set the alarm correctly and use the appropriate codes; if they are unable to do so, they will contact the alarm company, or another key holder, for advice and instructions
- Remain on the premises if there is a problem setting the alarms until the problem has been rectified

Each TCAT schools Caretaker will be the primary key holder in the case of an emergency and will attend the school out-of-hours when the alarm system is activated as soon as possible. In the event of a false alarm, they will follow the school's abort procedures and re-set all relevant alarms. In the event of a serious alarm, such as a trespasser, they will act in accordance with TCATs Lone Worker Policy and are required to contact the police immediately and to not place themselves in danger.

If the primary key holder is unavailable, either, or both, of the secondary key holders will be contacted to attend the premises.

7. Deposit charges

Existing members of staff that are identified as authorised personnel are not required to provide a deposit per key.

Temporary key holders are required to provide a deposit of £20 per key, which is refundable upon return of the key.

TCAT has the right to retain these deposits as it sees necessary for any charges.

All deposits are stored in a locked cabinet in the TCAT Central Offices; only the Chief Finance Officer and the Academy Business Manager has access to this cabinet.

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 22nd February 2027.

Signed by:

_____ Executive Headteacher/CEO

Date: _____

_____ Board appointed Trustee

Date: _____

Appendix A: Key Holder Log Book

Name	Key number	Start date	End date	Deposit paid	Signed out (TEM signature)	Signed in (TEM signature)	Signed out (key holder signature)	Signed in (key holder signature)

Appendix B: Key Holder Agreement

Agreement overview

Name of school ('the school') understands that it is important to maintain a high level of security at the school and, as such, access to the school's buildings and grounds is limited to a certain number of authorised staff who are identified key holders.

This agreement between name of key holder and the school aims to provide clear guidelines of practice for the key holder.

Duties and responsibilities

We expect you to be aware of the role you will play in TCAT and the school's overarching security measures and are fully cognisant of the responsibilities this role will involve with regard to keeping our school and community safe.

Your main roles will be:

- Adhering to the procedures and expectations outlined within this agreement
- Opening and closing the school where required
- Responding to calls outside normal working hours relating to security issues
- Providing access to the premises and classrooms outside of school hours where required, e.g. for after-school events
- Signing the [Key Holder Log Book](#) and keeping this up to date with any new keys held
- Maintaining responsibility for any keys issued to you
- Reporting loss or theft of keys to the Headteacher/Head of School and/or Trust Estate Manager
- Returning keys to the headteacher when they are no longer needed

The Trust Estate Manager will:

- Provide new, duplicate or replacement keys to you where necessary
- Be your point of contact if you have concerns or queries regarding your role

You will ensure you are fully aware of the contents of your contract of employment and the present agreement, as well as the following school policies and procedures:

- Key Holder Policy
- Security Risk Assessments
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure (HR3)
- Lone Worker Policy (HR17)
- Staff Code of Conduct (HR26)
- Staff and Volunteer Confidentiality Policy (HR32)

[Please amend this point to reflect the shifts your key holder will work] You will be required to open the school at [8:30am](#) each morning and close the school at [5:00pm](#) each evening from Monday to Friday.

You will be expected to be available outside of school hours for school events, e.g. parents' evenings. The Headteacher/Head of School or the Trust Estate Manager will inform you of any events at which your services are required in advance.

You will be required to be available to attend the school outside of work hours in the event that the school's security alarm system is activated.

You will only access areas of the school to which you have been permitted access – you will not access the following locations:

[Please insert here any locations that your key holder is not permitted to access]

- [The Headteacher/Head of School's office](#)
- [Pupil changing rooms](#)

You will be provided with security and alarm codes to ensure that you can access the school outside of hours, where required, and successfully re-set alarms in the event of a false security alarm – these codes will be provided to you by the Trust Estate Manager.

Expectations

Keys that are loaned to you remain the property of TCAT and the school, and we expect that you handle them with care and vigilance.

You will be expected to treat school keys as you would a valuable, personal possession. This means ensuring that keys are not left accessible and unattended and ensuring that you keep the keys securely locked away while they are not needed, e.g. in a locked cabinet.

You will be required to read and consent to this agreement in full prior to receiving your keys.

You will not loan school keys to anyone, including other members of staff.

You will not share any confidential codes, e.g. security alarm codes, with anyone, including other members of staff.

You will not make copies of any keys in your possession unless you are expressly directed to do so by the Trust Estate Manager as part of your duties.

In the unlikely event that you are directed to make copies of keys, you will be required to present the full receipt for this process confirming you have only made the required number of copies.

You will be expected to deliver any copies made of school keys to the Trust Estate Manager immediately so that they can be securely stored.

You will not change any locks in the school.

You will not use the keys to enter the school, or allow others to enter the school, for purposes other than those directly related to your duties.

Where you provide access to the school for contractors or other external services outside of school hours, you will ensure that these services are only allowed into the required areas of the school and that they are not left unsupervised.

Loss, theft or damage of keys

If the keys that have been loaned to you are lost, stolen or damaged beyond use, you must inform the Headteacher/Head of School and/or the Trust Estate Manager immediately to arrange replacements.

Where a key has been lost or stolen, you must ensure that you inform the headteacher without delay – the Trust Estate Manager will then assess what next steps are required, e.g. changing the locks.

Where a key is damaged beyond use, you will be required to return the damaged key to the [TCAT Central Office](#), where it will be disposed of securely.

If a key is lost, stolen or damaged due to negligence on your part, you may be required to cover the costs of replacement keys – this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Security alarms

An essential part of your role requires that you be available if a security alarm is set off within the school.

You will ensure that, where a security alarm goes off, you can get to the school within [30 minutes](#).

If you experience delays in reaching the school, you will notify your line manager, as well as other key holders where necessary, to ensure that potential security emergencies are handled promptly.

[Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, employers have a duty to safeguard the wellbeing of employees, particularly when they are working alone or in potentially dangerous situations. You must ensure that you have procedures in place for monitoring the safety of your key holder when they are responding to security breaches alone. We have provided an example for you.] TCAT operates a 'buddy' system in situations where you must attend school outside of regular hours alone. Your line manager will act as a designated buddy for these instances, and you will be responsible for informing them of:

- Your own contact details and those of your emergency contacts prior to receiving keys
- Your movements while responding to alarms
- Your decisions regarding the school's security and your planned next steps in response to a breach

You will be responsible for keeping your line manager up to date regarding your movements within previously agreed timeframes – your line manager will be responsible for following the school's escalation procedures if contact is not made as agreed in line with TCAT's Lone Worker Policy.

When arriving at the school after a security alarm has gone off, you will be expected to assess, prior to entering the building, whether a genuine security breach has occurred, or whether it has been a false alarm.

If you assess that a genuine security breach has taken place, you will not enter the building and will follow the procedures outlined in the Lone Worker Policy.

You will be required to call the police immediately if you assess that the school is facing a genuine security threat.

In the event of a false alarm, you will follow the school's abort procedures and re-set all relevant alarms using the alarm codes you have been given.

You will remain on site until the issue has been rectified and you are confident that the school's security is no longer at risk.

In accordance with TCATs Lone Worker Policy, you will not, under any circumstances, compromise your personal safety. If you feel unsafe at any time when responding to security alarms, you will remove yourself from the situation immediately, while ensuring that the police have been called and remaining on the school premises until the issue has been resolved.

Performance management

Being a key holder for a TCAT school is an important responsibility, and failure to complete duties professionally and consistently can have a subsequent, negative impact on the successful running and security of the school.

You will be expected to be punctual and vigilant in your duties, prioritising the safety and best interests of our pupils at all times.

You will ensure that you are punctual when opening and closing the school, and that every reasonable effort is made to avoid tardiness.

Where unforeseen circumstances prevent punctuality, you will inform the Headteacher/Head of School and/or the Trust Estate Manager immediately.

You will ensure that you organise appropriate cover at least [24 hours](#) in advance by contacting the Headteacher/Head of School and/or the Trust Estate Manager if you cannot attend the school to fulfil your responsibilities, e.g. due to illness or extenuating circumstances.

Where unforeseen circumstances mean you are unable to open and close the school and cannot give [24 hours'](#) notice, we expect that you will make every reasonable effort to ensure cover is in place for your role by contacting the Headteacher/Head of School and/or the Trust Estate Manager as soon as reasonably possible.

You are expected to inform the Headteacher/Head of School and/or the Trust Estate Manager of intended holidays [two weeks](#) in advance so that appropriate cover can be arranged.

The Headteacher/Head of School and/or the Trust Estate Manager will communicate any changes to policies, procedures and the contents of this agreement to you, as well as identifying to you any training that may help you to conduct your duties.

Any concerns over your performance and any failure to meet the terms of this agreement will be first informally raised to you by your line manager – if the behaviour persists, or if a concern is particularly severe, the situation will be managed in line with TCATs Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Agreement

Please read the following terms and conditions carefully, sign as appropriate, and return to the Headteacher/Head of School or the Trust Estate Manager by [date](#).

I, _____ (name of key holder), agree that I:

Have read this agreement thoroughly, and consent to abide by its terms in full.

Understand the responsibilities of my role and the level of service and professionalism that the school expects from me.

Am aware of the relevant TCAT and school policies and procedures mentioned in this agreement.

Will communicate regularly and effectively with my line manager and the headteacher.

Will treat any keys I am loaned with care, making all reasonable effort to avoid loss, theft or damage.

Understand that I may be liable to cover the cost of replacement keys, and that, in the event that loss, theft or damage of keys occurs as a result of my own actions, I may not be entitled to a refund on my deposit.

Will not share confidential information, e.g. alarm codes, with anyone.

Will be available to perform my duties out of school hours, including in emergency situations and for after-school events.

Understand that failure to abide by the terms of this agreement may result in the conducting of disciplinary procedures as outlined in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Signature: _____ Date: _____