

Three Counties Academy Trust



Education Welfare Officer Home Visit Policy

#D31

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Statement of intent

Three Counties Academy Trust firmly believes that regular attendance is essential to the successful academic development of pupils.

The role of the Education Welfare Officer is crucial to the overall performance of the Trust and our schools. With this in mind, we have established this policy for home visits.

A large part of the Education Welfare Officers' time will be spent outside school premises. For this reason, we believe that clear procedures must be in place to avoid misunderstandings or confusion about home visits.

Home visits are a useful way of addressing the problems that lead to poor attendance; however, since the Education Welfare Officer is entering private property, it is important that all parties are made aware of the rules and procedures. Our Education Welfare Officer will maintain the highest professional standards at all times.

A copy of this policy will be made available to parents via the Three Counties Academy Trust website www.threecountiesacademytrust.com.

1. Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy is designed to be used in conjunction with other policies such as the following:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Children Missing from Education Policy
- Lone Worker Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate procedures are in place for attendance officer home visits

The Executive Headteacher will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy
- Ensuring the Education Welfare Officer has the appropriate training to conduct home visits
- Ensuring the appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place

The Education Welfare Officer will be responsible for:

- Following this policy at all times
- Always acting in the best interests of pupils

3. Personal safety

It is the responsibility of the Education Welfare Officer to keep themselves safe at all times. They will avoid any situations that may risk their safety.

The Education Welfare Officer will carry out their work in line with the Lone Worker Policy in order to keep themselves safe from harm while working alone.

A lone worker risk assessment will be carried out prior to the commencement of any lone working and will be updated in response to any changes in circumstances.

The Education Welfare Officer will carry a mobile phone at all times. The number will be recorded and held by the Executive Headteacher and Head of School by phase.

The Education Welfare Officer will 'check in' by calling the Executive Headteacher every two hours to update the school of their whereabouts unless the Education Welfare Officer has discussed and agreed in advance with the Executive Headteacher any parameters outside that allowance.

A home visit risk assessment will be conducted by the Education Welfare Officer prior to a home visit and discuss any potential issues with the Executive Headteacher or the Executive Leader for Safeguarding and Inclusion in advance. If a particular home visit poses new risks, the risk assessment will be amended before the visit.

The Education Welfare Officer will not enter the home of a pupil unless an appointment has been made and the parent is present. Written confirmation of the appointment will be recorded and held by the Education Welfare Officer.

Appointment records will include the time and location, along with the name of the pupil. Signatures of the parents and the Education Welfare Officer will also be kept.

When working alone, the Education Welfare Officer will use their phone to raise the alarm if needed. If the Education Welfare Officer feels that they are in immediate danger, they will use the alarm system to notify the Executive Headteacher or the Executive Leader for Safeguarding and Inclusion who will contact the police.

Details of the vehicles used by the Education Welfare Officer, including make, model, registration number and colour, will be held by the Chief Financial Officer. All vehicles must have the required up-to-date insurance.

4. Training

The Education Welfare Officer will be fully trained in safe working practices. The Chief Financial Officer will be responsible for organising the relevant training.

Before performing their duties, the Education Welfare Officer will undergo the appropriate training. This includes training related to cultural awareness, diversity and racial equality, specific equipment training, manual handling training, first aid, and training in disengagement techniques.

5. Home visits

Home visits allow the Trust to learn the underlying reasons behind poor attendance. By opening a dialogue with a pupil's parents, the Education Welfare Officer can offer the required support.

There will exist requirements for a rapid home visit for a pupil as decided by the Education Welfare Officer if they deem it appropriate to ensure the pupil is in school and safe. These rapid visits will always have another staff member accompanying the Education Welfare Officer.

A list of potential visits for known and ongoing absence issues will be compiled on a weekly basis. This list will include the name and address of the pupil, the name and contact details of their parents, along with the attendance record of the pupil. The list will be approved and signed by the Executive Headteacher or the Chief Financial Officer each Monday before any visits occur.

If the pupil's parents are not present at the arranged time, the Education Welfare Officer will wait no longer than 15 minutes. If the pupil's parents do not arrive, the visit will be cancelled.

If the pupil's parents have given prior notice that they are running late, the Education Welfare Officer will not enter the residence until they arrive. If they are over 30 minutes late, the visit will be cancelled.

Once in place, appointment arrangements will be adhered to. Notification will be given to the Executive Headteacher or Chief Financial Officer if any changes are made.

Identification cards will be worn at all times. They will be clearly displayed on the front and outside of the Education Welfare Officers' clothing.

The Education Welfare Officer will not enter a pupil's home should they feel unsafe. If a visit is cancelled because of concerns over safety, the reason for cancelling the visit will be communicated in writing to the Executive Headteacher.

If there are potentially dangerous animals in the residence, the Education Welfare Officer will request that they are kept in a separate room. If the parent refuses, or is unable to adhere to this request, the visit will be cancelled. The reason for the cancellation will be communicated to the Executive Headteacher in writing.

Before and after the visit, the Education Welfare Officer will 'check in' notifying Reception of their departure from and return to site.

6. After the visit

Once a visit has ended, any agreements made between the Education Welfare Officer and parents will be recorded and kept in the pupil's attendance record.

Reminder letters will be sent to the pupil's parents if the pupil fails to adhere to the agreements made during the home visit.

A note will be made in the pupil's attendance record if they fail to follow the agreement.

Continued failure to adhere to the agreement will result in a follow-up visit.

If the pupil's attendance falls below 70% over the course of six weeks, the appropriate authorities will be notified in order for legal proceedings to be considered.

7. Child protection and safeguarding

The Education Welfare Officer will carry out their work in line with the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy at all times.

Prior to the Education Welfare Officer being appointed, the appropriate background checks will be obtained. This includes an enhanced DBS certificate and barred list check.

The Education Welfare Officer will not be put in a situation where they are alone with a pupil during a home visit – a parent will always be present.

Where required, physical intervention by staff will be enacted in accordance with the Physical Intervention Policy. Staff will only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and it will be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

The Education Welfare Officer will report any safeguarding concerns to the Executive Leader for Safeguarding and Inclusion or a deputy DSL as soon as possible.

Any allegations made against the Education Welfare Officer will be dealt with in accordance with the Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy or Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Any complaints regarding the Education Welfare Officer conduct or the home visit will be raised in line with the Complaints Policy and Procedures.

8. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Headteacher.

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for monitoring this policy and procedures and will amend it accordingly following any incidents or concerns.

Signed by:

_____	Executive Headteacher	Date: _____
_____	Chair of Trustees	Date: _____