

Procedure for Dealing with Knives and Offensive Weapons

Context

It is illegal to carry knives or other offensive weapons on and around school premises. The Governing Body at Shirley Junior School recognises that the presence of weapons, or items which could potentially be offensive weapons, in the school would not only create unacceptable risks of bullying, injury or death, but also create a climate that undermines the educational purposes of the school.

It is therefore the school policy to forbid the possession, custody and use of weapons by unauthorised persons in, on, or around the school premises and during school activities.

These rules apply at all times except where an item, which could potentially be an offensive weapon, is issued to a student by a member of staff at the school or is required by the school for the purposes of teaching and learning, as necessary, for the delivery of the curriculum. Misuse of such items will be dealt with as though possession is not authorised.

For the purpose of this Policy a “weapon” is:

- a firearm of any description, including starting pistols, air guns and any type of replica or toy gun;
- knives, including all variations of bladed objects i.e. pocket knives, craft knives, scissors etc;
- explosives, including fireworks, aerosol sprays, lighters, matches;
- laser pens or other objects, even if manufactured for a non-violent purpose but has a potentially violent use i.e. the purpose of keeping or carrying the object is for use, or threat of use, as a weapon.
- Offensive Weapons Act 2019 which includes reference to knife crime prevention orders. Part 4 of the Act redefines what a “flick knife”

Any student found to be in breach of the policy shall be subject to action under the school’s Behaviour policy. This could result in a fixed term or permanent exclusion from the school. In some circumstances, the police might also be contacted.

If the decision is made to issue a fixed term exclusion, a risk assessment will be completed to assess the risk regarding the student’s return to school. This will be submitted to the Hamwic Education Trust. Where appropriate, outside agencies will be contacted for further guidance and support, including the Youth Offending Team. If appropriate, a placement at the Pupil Referral Unit (The Compass School) will be considered for a short period and appropriate specific intervention put in place.

The school would like to work in partnership with parents and encourage the following to enable parents to protect their children from knives:

- Make sure your child knows that it’s illegal to carry a knife with intent to use it as a weapon, even in self-defence. Being found with a knife – and police can search anyone they suspect of having a knife – could lead to your child being arrested, going to court and getting a criminal record or even a prison sentence. It could also lead to permanent exclusion from the school.
- Talk to your child about the dangers of carrying a knife. Carrying a knife actually increases the chances of being stabbed or injured – an attacker could use your knife against you.
- Stress that not carrying a knife, and walking away from a potentially dangerous situation, is cleverer and tougher than getting involved.

Procedure for Dealing with Knives and Offensive Weapons:

Under most circumstances, the Police should be informed of any incident believed to involve a weapon. However, where, in the judgement of the staff, the circumstances are wholly innocent and there is no suggestion of the use of the article as a weapon, the matter may be dealt with internally on a disciplinary basis.

When contacting the Police the senior member of staff dealing with the matter, should give his/her evaluation of the seriousness of the incident, (i.e. in progress, threat to life, or weapon secure, for collection

only) to help the Police to make their own judgement on the nature and immediacy of the response required.

There may also be some exceptional circumstances where members of staff, who have been made aware that a weapon may be on school premises, decide that they need to take action before the Police arrive. If this is the case:

Designated staff should always be called to assess and manage any situation where an offensive weapon is suspected.

At Shirley Junior School this is Annette Hixon, the Designated Senior Lead or a member of Senior Leadership Team:

- where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a student might have in their possession an offensive weapon, knife or blade, it might be appropriate for the Headteacher, or an authorised member of staff, to conduct a search of that student or his/her possessions, with or without the student's consent;
- in making that decision, a risk assessment approach should be adopted and it should be noted that such immediate preventive action could either prevent a potentially dangerous situation escalating or could, conversely, inflame the situation;
- such a search may only be carried out where the member of staff and student are on School premises or are elsewhere and the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the student.

A member of staff carrying out a search:

- may not require a student to remove any clothing other than outer clothing, i.e. any item of clothing not being worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment being worn as underwear;
- must be of the same sex as the student;
- may carry out the search only in the presence of another member of staff who is also of the same sex as the student;
- a student's possessions (including any goods over which he/she appears to have control) may not be searched except in his/her presence and another member of staff;
- if in the course of a search the member of staff finds anything he/she suspects of falling within the knives and offensive weapon category, or any other thing he/she suspects is evidence in relation to an offence, he/she may seize and retain it ;
- members of staff may, on occasion, take possession of a knife or other weapon brought to School by a person in circumstances which contravene the Offensive Weapons Act 1996;
- possession of the weapon in such circumstances by a member of staff is likely to be with good reason or lawful authority, and thus not an offence under the Act, but a member of staff in possession of a weapon in such circumstances should secure it, and pass it immediately to the Headteacher or, in the Headteacher's absence, the Deputy Headteacher, and arrange without delay to surrender it to the Police, or
- where satisfied that it is reasonable to do so, arrange for it to be taken away by the parent/carer of the person from whom it was taken
- will ensure that if any items that are confiscated are locked in the school safe until the above decision has been made.

This policy has been written with reference to relevant legislation including:

is <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2019/17/part/4/enacted>

- Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Section 139 A) prohibits possession of an article with a blade or sharply pointed or offensive weapon in a public place. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/33/section/139>
- Prevention of Crime Act 1953 (Section 1) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/1-2/14/section/1>

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child protection and Safeguarding Policy