



KIRPAN POLICY

Status	To be approved	Approval	Full Governing Body
Maintenance	Full Governing Body	Role(s) responsible	Head Teacher
Date Effective	February 2019	Date of last review	July 2025
Date of next review	September 2026	Date withdrawn	Not withdrawn.
Lead Professional	Deputy Headteacher	Location of policy	www.coltonhills.co.uk

COLTON HILLS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Rationale

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure religious tolerance and harmony within the setting serving primarily the Sikh community but also diverse religious and ethnic communities.
- Encourage and value children's and staff's religious and cultural practices.
- Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone.

Sikhs who have been initiated by receiving Amrit are expected to always wear the Five Ks.

The Panj Kakaars (Five Ks) are:

- **Kesh** (uncut hair) signifying spiritual strength, power, humility and an acceptance of God's will.
- **Kangha** (wooden comb) signifying cleanliness of the mind and body.
- **Kara** (iron bracelet) signifying one God who is beyond birth and death; unity and equality. Usually worn by all Sikhs (Initiated or not).
- **Kacherra** (specially made cotton underwear) signifying high moral character and modesty.
- **Kirpan** (small dagger/sword), 'kirpa' meaning blessings and benevolence, and 'aan' meaning honour and dignity respect, justice and authority; it is a reminder that Sikhs are Saint Soldiers. However, the Kirpan is never used for offensive purposes. The Kirpan is a sacred instrument of Sikh life and is treated and used with great spiritual care.

It is not considered appropriate to wear one of the Five Ks without wearing the other four (apart from the Kara).

The Kirpan is not a weapon in the normal sense of the word and has no equivalent in the English language. **It must not be referred to as a weapon at any point.** Its concept, wearing and use within the Sikh religion as an article of faith is unique and original.

For the Sikh, wearing of a Kirpan is a spiritual tradition for which they seek a just degree of support to exercise their personal and religious freedoms. The Kirpan stands as a perpetual reminder of the courage and compassion of the Sikh Gurus, and their love for all humanity. In it are encapsulated the values of equality and liberty.

Policy

There should be no objection to the practice of wearing the Five Ks, including the Kirpan.



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Members of the community – children, parents, staff and governors – should be aware of the significance of the Five Ks.

Parents should be informed of the school's policy and guidelines on the wearing of religious symbols.

Parents or religious leaders should be asked to authorise the wearing of the Kirpan by confirming that a young person has been initiated by receiving Amrit and are therefore expected to wear the Five Ks at all times. Or inform school that their child/ren are practising wearing them ready to take the Amrit Dhari service. The school will keep a register of those students this applies to. It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school at the earliest convenience of their child becoming practising or becoming Amrit Dhari.

The Kirpan should not be more than 3 inches in length (including both blade and handle) and the blade should not exceed 1.5 inches in length; the Kirpan should always be sheathed and worn out of sight.

The Kirpan should never be unsheathed and should never be used as a weapon to threaten others. In either case the Kirpan would constitute an offensive weapon within the law. In the event of any such occurrences, the offender would be subject to the setting's disciplinary procedures which may include police involvement.

Management will expect to remove the Kirpan from any child not wearing all Five Ks and to contact the parents at the earliest opportunity to discuss the situation with them if there is no confirmation of them practising or having taken the Amrit Dhari ceremony.

If anyone wearing any Kakars is involved in a situation where it is felt they are compromising the safety and wellbeing of anyone else, or is very likely to do so, management are to immediately request that they leave the classroom and accompany them to the manager's office where appropriate action will be decided and taken.

During physical activities children will be expected to cover the Kara appropriately. The Kirpan, which should be under clothing, should be carried in a secure cushioned pocket/pouch so that it protects its wearer and others, is not visible, and other children have no access to it. (If a certain physical sport is being played the teacher can ask for the Kirpan to be locked away so it is not dropped).

Parents of Kirpan wearing children will need to sign a disclaimer which waives their right to make any claims against the school, its staff or pupils should anything happen because of them carrying a Kirpan.

Children and staff should be allowed to wear the **standard** sized Kara; it should not be regarded as an item of jewelry. A **thick** Kara should not be allowed because of the danger of accidental harm to the wearer or others. It should not have an edge to it, it needs to be smooth.

Children with long hair should be allowed to wear a Dastar (Turban) and/or Patka (a square piece of material used to contain the hair) to match the settings uniform.

Children may remove the Dastar (Turban) during physical activities if they wish but should not be expected to do so. Parents should ensure that the child wears a Patka underneath and is able to retie the Turban independently.

Home/school liaison may be appropriate to achieve mutual understanding and gain parental confidence.



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It is common practice for individual Sikhs to give serious consideration to the size of the Kirpan that would be appropriate for them to wear in different contexts such as school, work, leisure and other activities

Some Sikhs may find it acceptable to wear a smaller and more symbolic Kirpan, as small as one and a half inches to be worn in school and that it may be sealed so that it cannot be drawn. A Kirpan may sometimes be secured in protective padding.

1. Colton Hills has a zero tolerance to the carrying of an offensive, bladed or sharply pointed weapon on a school site and contravention of this may result in exclusion from school by either the Alternative Provision, Managed Move or Permanent Exclusion Route. This is covered by the criminal justice legislation outlined below and contravention will result in the police being notified.
2. Section 1 Prevention of Crime Act 1953 makes it an offence to have an offensive weapon in a public place. Section 139 (1) Criminal Justice Act 1988 makes it an offence to have a bladed or sharply pointed article in a public place. Section 139A (1) Criminal Justice Act 1988 makes it an offence to have a bladed or sharply pointed article on school premises. Section 139A (2) Criminal Justice Act 1988 makes it an offence to have an offensive weapon on school premises.
3. This does not mean that Sikhs cannot wear the Kirpan. The Criminal Justice Act provides a specific defense for a person if they can prove that they wear the Kirpan for religious reasons.
4. Any person who claims they are carrying the Kirpan for religious reasons must be able to satisfy the police (if stopped), and ultimately the courts (if charged) of this. This is not a licence for Sikhs to use the Kirpan for unlawful purposes.