



Status	Awaiting Approval	Approval	Full Governing Body.
Maintenance	Full Governing Body	Role(s) responsible	Head Teacher
Date Effective	March 2018	Date of last review	May 2025
Date of next review	May 2027	Date withdrawn	Not withdrawn

WEAPONS POLICY

Rationale and Context

This document outlines the professional responsibilities related to weapons that apply to all staff, in line with Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) requirements and procedures. This document has been written following training and guidance for nominated staff from the police on a school's responsibility and powers of search with regards to offensive weapons.

This policy relates to all kinds of weapon and any object used with malicious intent.

The Violent Crime Reduction Act makes it an arrestable offence to carry an offensive weapon in public without lawful authority, or to carry in public any article with a blade or which is sharply pointed without good cause.

It is an offence to carry an offensive weapon or knife on the school premises

The police have the power to enter school premises to search for an offensive weapon.

Recent guidance from the Home Office has determined that possession of knives and other offensive weapons within a school should not be dealt with under the Schools Protocol and National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) as has previously been the case.

In all cases where possession of a knife or other offensive weapon occurs within school, a crime will be recorded by police and investigation carried out. The offence should no longer be dealt with purely under school rules, policies and procedures

Schools should report all cases where pupils are found to have knives in their possession to the Police, ideally a Safer Schools Officer if available, to ensure that any offences are investigated fully.

Staff

If a member of staff suspects or is informed by other students that a weapon is somewhere in school or at an offsite educational visit, they must report their suspicion immediately to the DSL or another member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Searching for weapons

The Head and any authorised member of the school staff who has reasonable grounds for believing that a student may have with them, or in their possession, a knife or offensive weapon has the right to search that student.



DfE guidance permits:

- Searches by a staff member of the same sex as the pupil and witnessed by another staff member wherever possible.
- In exceptional circumstances, searches may be carried out without a witness where there is a risk of serious harm if the search is delayed.

In exceptional circumstances, a staff member of a different sex may conduct the search where there is a risk of serious harm and it is not reasonably practicable to wait for a same-sex member of staff. Searches will normally be carried out by a member of staff of the same sex as the pupil and witnessed by a second member of staff. Where there is a risk of serious harm if the search is not conducted immediately, the search may be undertaken without a witness and/or by a member of staff of a different sex, in accordance with DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.

Current DfE guidance requires schools to consider vulnerability factors before searching.

Before undertaking a search, staff should consider whether the pupil may have additional vulnerabilities, including SEND, trauma, mental health difficulties, safeguarding concerns or other protected characteristics, and whether alternative approaches should be considered.

This would also support KCSIE's emphasis on contextual safeguarding and understanding vulnerability.

The student will not be required to remove any clothing other than outer clothing and if the student's possessions are searched this must also be done in the presence of another adult. The search may be carried out on the school premises or any other place where the student is under the supervision of a member of staff. A weapon detection device may be used by a designated member of staff at this stage.

The person carrying out the search is able to use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances for exercising that power. See the Department for Education guidance on reasonable force: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

Police Involvement

Following the Child Q review, DfE guidance contains specific requirements concerning strip searches by police.

School staff must not undertake strip searches.

A strip search may only be conducted by police officers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE).



Where police intend to conduct a strip search on school premises, the school will ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and that the pupil's welfare remains paramount.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be informed immediately and must consider any relevant safeguarding concerns and vulnerabilities. In line with Home Office regulations, the Head Teacher and any other authorised member of staff will involve the police in this process. If a weapon is found on the student the Head Teacher or, in their absence, a Deputy Head Teacher or DSL will inform the police.

Confiscation

The school will confiscate the weapon. This will be handed to the Police.

Record Keeping

DfE guidance recommends recording:

- grounds for the search;
- who conducted it;
- who witnessed it;
- outcome;
- follow-up safeguarding actions.

And, in addition:

- Grounds for suspicion.
- Whether consent was sought.
- Details of police involvement.
- Safeguarding concerns identified.
- Referrals made to Children's Social Care, Early Help or other agencies.
- Outcome of risk assessment.

Detailed, up-to-date, written records of all incidents, where a search of any kind has been used, will be kept by the DSL.

The record should include:

- Name of member of staff
- Date and time of the incident
- Name(s) of students involved
- Names of witnesses
- Location of the incident
- Description of the incident
- Steps taken to calm the situation if force was considered necessary
- Reason why the use of force was necessary
- Nature of the force used
- The student's response



- The outcome
- Details of any injury suffered or damage to property
- Details of weapon(s) found

DfE guidance says parents should normally be informed as soon as possible after the search unless doing so would put the child at greater risk. Parents/carers will normally be informed as soon as practicable following a search and informed of the outcome, unless there is a safeguarding reason not to do so.

School Sanctions

Carrying a weapon is a serious breach of the school's Behaviour Policy and will normally result in permanent exclusion. But any decision should reflect DfE suspension and exclusion guidance requiring case-by-case consideration. Possession of a weapon will normally be considered a serious breach of the Behaviour Policy and is likely to result in permanent exclusion. The Headteacher will consider the individual circumstances of each case in accordance with statutory exclusion guidance.

In the exceptional circumstances that the student returns to school, a full risk assessment will be completed and maintained while the student remains at Colton Hills.

Safeguarding Assessment Following Any Weapon Incident

KCSIE places significant emphasis on understanding why children bring weapons into school, including exploitation, county lines, gang involvement, coercion, abuse, and fear of violence. Any pupil found in possession of a weapon will be regarded as potentially at risk of significant harm. The DSL will undertake a safeguarding assessment and consider referrals to Children's Social Care, Early Help, Youth Justice Services, Prevent, Violence Reduction initiatives or other relevant agencies.

Final summary

Following any weapons incident, the school will adopt a child-centred safeguarding approach, undertake an assessment of need and risk, and work with external agencies where appropriate to address underlying causes and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Legal references

- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation (DfE, updated 2023).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version).
- Behaviour in Schools Guidance. [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk), [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk), [\[assets.pub...ice.gov.uk\]](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk)



Colton Hills Community School

Many Minds, One Mission

