



WEST GRANTHAM

Church of England Primary Academy

WEAPONS POLICY

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Statement

No student or non-student, including adults and visitors, shall possess, use, or distribute a weapon when in the Trust academies except as provided in this policy. The Trust will act to enforce this policy and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, academy employee or member of the community who violates this policy.

Aim

- To assure safe academy environments for all students, staff and academy personnel
- To show the direct action that the primary Academy will take around the use of weapons on site taking into account the full context around each incident.

Definitions

1. A “weapon” means any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; airguns; pellet guns; BB guns; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; poisons, explosives; martial arts objects; razor or razor blades; chains and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.
2. No person will possess, use or distribute any object, device or instrument having the appearance of a weapon and such objects, devices or instruments shall be treated as weapons including weapons which are broken or non-functional, look-alike guns; toy guns; and any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon.
3. No persons shall use articles designed for other purposes (i.e. tools, lasers or laser pointers, belts, combs, pencils, files, scissors, etc.) to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate and such use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.
4. “Academy location” includes any academy building or grounds, whether leased, rented, owned or controlled by the Trust. The area of entrance or departure from the academy or events, all locations where academy functions are conducted, and anywhere students are under the jurisdiction of the academy.

Exceptions

A student who finds a weapon on the way to the academy or in the academy location, or a student who discovers that he or she accidentally has a weapon in his or her possession, and takes the weapon to the Headteacher’s office, shall not be considered to possess a weapon. If it would be impractical or dangerous to take the weapon to the Headteacher’s office, a student shall not be considered to possess a weapon if he or she immediately notifies a member of staff of the weapon’s location.

Preventative Strategies - Recognition

For all schools and settings, it is important to develop appropriate strategies in order to prevent the issue of weapon misuse or any contextual issues around the misuse of weapons such as children having them to ‘feel safe’ from peers or gangs. Firstly, and most importantly for schools and settings is recognition that incidents where children bring weapons onto site may happen intentionally as well as unintentionally even with the most stringent of policies. In these cases the immediate actions taken by staff must be prompt and consistent and therefore ALL staff must know and understand this policy and the expectations of keeping children safe. In any circumstance where this occurs it is important that senior leaders take forward any learning from such incidents to improve policy, revise training and improve practice.

Creating a Safeguarding Culture

In order for pupils and staff to feel safe it is necessary that everyone agrees to and works to create a culture of vigilance and positively contributes to the sharing of information where there may be risk. By creating a strong culture of safeguarding within school all individuals accessing the site should feel safe to raise concerns, seek support and for a seamless and consistent response to incidents to be followed. In order to create this environment the whole workforce and pupils should receive appropriate learning and training around the expectations upon them in the event that a weapon may be brought onto site. This includes, how to raise the alarm, procedures for lockdown, use of social media and critical incident response. Staff and pupils should feel able to contribute to this learning/training to understand what to do in a number of potentially different circumstances.

Working with Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers need to be aware of the school's stringent policy around weapons and support the decision made by senior leaders in the event of an incident. Parents/Carers should always be vigilant of the behaviours of their own children and seek support and intervention when necessary. If parents/carers believe that their child may be carrying a weapon they should inform the school immediately and the police in order to protect not only their child but other children and adults. By sharing the information immediate intervention can be offered and a plan of support and services could be put in place without an incident occurring. By continuing good communication between home and school a positive safety plan could be created to manage the safety and the well-being of any child who may need it.

Working with Partnership Agencies/Signposting Services

Multi-agency working can consolidate in house procedures in schools/settings. By accessing advice, support and guidance when required, effective decisions can be made in collaboration to improve outcomes for children who may be at risk of harm. Seeking advice and guidance can act as a preventative measure so that the right course of action is taken at the earliest opportunity. If schools continue to promote positive working relationships with front door services such as the police and social care, effective responses and partnership working can achieve positive outcomes for children. It is important that signposting is also available to pupils in the event that they don't feel confident raising an issue to staff or a peer. It is useful to have a resource board with support services on a wide range of issues so young people can seek their own solutions should they wish to. In the same way external services or support programmes could be brought in to talk to young people about specific issues in support of the prevention of peer on peer abuse.

Gathering the Facts

In all circumstances, staff need to speak to all the pupils involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the pupils to tell you what happened. Only interrupt the pupil from this to gain clarity with open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?) A full and clear record of exactly what the pupil has said in their own language should be made (and no individual interpretation of the facts made which could impact on the disclosure) and stored following each school/setting's own recording protocols (paper or electronic systems).

Consider Intent

From the information gathered the next step would be to consider intent. Did the pupil intend to bring a weapon onto the school site in order to harm someone in a deliberate act or did the young person bring the weapon on site as a form of defence or for their own safety? Both situations are of equal concern, however one shows a deliberate attempt of harm and both circumstances may have different outcomes.

Deciding on the Next Course of Action

From the outcome of the investigation the school must decide on the level of risk the pupil poses in school. If the risk is clear and the intent is obvious then a fixed term exclusion and a disciplinary hearing may follow or the decision to permanently exclude may be made following the necessary protocols. However, depending on the intent, the age of the child and also the circumstances surrounding the incident or the contextual issues it may be a fixed term exclusion is given followed by a risk assessment/safety plan put in place following the pupil's return to school.

Returning to School/Safety Planning

Safety planning is a positive way of supporting a child who may benefit from a planned approach to support or intervention following an incident where a weapon has been brought to school. Safety plans support the child by considering the behaviour behind the use of a weapon and plan ways to manage any identified risks/triggers and seek support from adults and peers. They are inclusive of parents and staff and are a planned intervention to support young people in feeling secure in the school/setting, helping young people identify behaviours that may leave them feeling anxious or at risk and have strategies that they can apply to keep themselves feeling safe. The language of safety planning is more positive than risk assessment and can give security to the child that a joined up approach is being followed by all in school.

Consequences for Weapon Possession/Use/Distribution by Students

Appropriate academy sanctions (for example whether to permanently exclude or otherwise) needs to be at the discretion of the Headteacher after a full investigation into the incident has taken place, in accordance with DfE Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England 2012. Sanctions may include some or all of the following;

1. Confiscation of the weapon
2. Parent or Carer notification and student(s) collected immediately
3. Immediate notification of the Police
4. Exclusion for a fixed period of time (possible permanent exclusion) pending investigation
5. Pupil reintegration team (PRT)

Consequences for Weapon Possession/Use/Distribution by Non-Students

Any member of the Trust staff who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action, including non-renewal, suspension, or discharge as deemed appropriate by the Trust.

Law enforcement will be notified.

Guidelines for Actions and Sanctions

Guidelines for actions and sanctions following student involvement with an offensive weapon:

- **POSSESSION:**
Fixed term exclusion of five days and recommendation for permanent exclusion.
- **POSSESSION WITH INTENT TO USE OR INTIMIDATE:**
Recommendation for permanent exclusion.
- **USE OF OFFENSIVE WEAPON AGAINST A PERSON ON ACADEMY PREMISES:**
Recommendation for permanent exclusion.

Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Department for Education guidance adhered to by adults working within the Primary Academy

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1091133/Searching_screening_and_confiscation_advice_2014__updated_2018_.pdf