



THE WESTLEIGH SCHOOL
Aspiring & Achieving Together



School Security – Dealing with Offensive Weapons: Guidelines for Staff

Policy Originator:	T Kearns
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If any member of staff has reason to believe that a pupil is carrying an offensive weapon, they should send for SLT / pastoral manager immediately, who will deal with the situation.

In any situation where there is an on-going serious risk to the safety of pupils or staff, the police should be called immediately and SLT sent for to give further assistance

Offensive Weapons

It is an offence to carry an offensive weapon or knife on school premises and in a public place, unless a person has good reason or lawful authority to do so.

Definition

“Any article made or adapted for causing injury or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him” (any article which could be used dangerously).

As a school we would include items such as any knives (including pocket knives), sling shots, bb guns/imitation firearms etc.

Staff Involvement where a weapon is suspected

As a general rule the police should be called to deal with any incident believed to involve an offensive weapon. There may, however, be isolated exceptions where, in the judgement of the staff, the circumstances are not believed to be unlawful or criminal, and there is no suggestion of the use of the article as an offensive weapon, when the matter can be dealt with on a disciplinary basis.

In some cases a member of SLT will ask the pupil to hand over the weapon, only if they feel that this does not pose a risk to themselves or others, also they feel comfortable doing so. The member of SLT will secure the weapon (school safe) and arrange to surrender it to the police if applicable. Dependant on the make-up of the item (workman's tool), arrangements could be made for it to be taken away by the parent/guardian, only if this is a reasonable course of action.

Where possible, staff should not confront a pupil or person suspected of possessing a weapon in the presence of other pupils. Preferably two or more members of staff should divert the pupil or person to a place where no other pupils are present.

Immediate preventative action could sometimes nip in the bud a potentially dangerous situation, or it could precipitate it. SLT will decide upon the course of action, according to the individual case.

Where there is a reasonable belief that a pupil might be carrying an offensive weapon or blade, it is appropriate for the Pastoral manager or a member of SLT to search a pupil. Wherever possible this will be done with the pupil's consent.

Teachers now have the power to search pupils for knives and offensive weapons without consent. As part of the government's drive to ensure schools continue to be safe and secure places to learn. The power comes alongside the ability for the schools to screen pupils for weapons using devices such as 'detection arches' and 'wand' metal detectors.

Whenever possible, the Pastoral Manager will conduct the search. In addition, members of SLT, Heads of Year are authorised by the Headteacher to search pupils for knives and offensive weapons.

A search should never take place where there is any risk to staff or pupils. In those circumstances the police should be called.

- Two members of staff must always be present at a search, one of whom will have received appropriate training, on how to conduct a search and the appropriate extent of a search
- The search must be undertaken by a staff member who is the same sex as the pupil*
- Where possible, it should take place out of public view in a designated office space, not in a classroom.

**(The only exception to this would be if there is a risk of serious harm to a person if we do not conduct the search immediately)*

Where the person suspected of carrying a weapon is not a registered pupil at the school and is an intruder on site, or where an incident involving a pupil takes place outside the school premises, the police should always undertake any search and be called in any event.

In relation to any firearms/imitation firearms recovered/seized – great care must be taken, as it would not be established until a later time as to whether the weapon contained any live ammunition. The police must be called in all cases of seizures re: the above to make the weapon safe.

Where the police have been involved in dealing with an incident in school, parents of the pupil will be informed as soon, as is reasonably practicable (after consultation with the police and child protection officer) However, the priority in such cases will be to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

In the event of any search being conducted, a record of that search must be recorded (as soon as practicable). If any restraint or use of force was used in the securing of the item from a student, then a record of this must also be made (whether any items are recovered or not). The search and restraint / use of force forms are in the schools J Drive, under pastoral data, under the relevant search records.

This policy is one of the school's pastoral policies and should not be read in isolation from the whole school Behaviour Management Policy.