

Knives and other Weapons in School Policy

July 2022

Version 5

1. Scope

This policy applies to all staff at Expanse Learning School (Hereafter referred to as the school).

2. Objectives

To inform employees of the process that must be followed in the event of a knife or other weapon being brought onto school premises. When a young person decides to take a knife or other offensive weapon into a school, it is serious with a potentially fatal consequence.

A police officer MUST attend the school and investigate every case of weapons possession by a student.

Schools cannot be left to deal with possession of a weapon themselves. It is critical that the reasons for possession by students are fully understood to enable proportionate early intervention to take place to reduce the likelihood of repeat possession. This document has been created for guidance, support and to advance the knowledge of school leaders around the powers and law when dealing with offensive weapons.

3. Core Principles

As young people develop into maturity they naturally experiment with their behaviour and test boundaries. The younger they are the less capacity they will have for restraining themselves, resisting temptation or resisting peer pressure. None of these excuse poor or criminal behaviour. It actually increases the need to intervene as early as possible, to show that actions have consequences, and that harm is being caused.

Police and partner intervention should assist in one or more of the following ways:

- Confront young people with the consequences of offending
- Help young people to develop a sense of personal responsibility
- Manage risk to young people within the community
- Reinforce the serious nature of weapon-related crime
- Strengthen factors that reduce the risk of re-offending
- Encourage reparation
- Encourage the restoration of relationships of trust
- Define, agree and reinforce the responsibilities of parents.

4. The law on carrying knives

Carrying a knife is a criminal offence under s.1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 and s.4 of the Offensive Weapons Act 1996 (which inserted s.139A into the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons, Bladed and Pointed Articles on school premises). It is no defense for a student to assert that they were carrying a knife for their own protection or were carrying it for someone else.

5. Recordable Offences for weapons being carried in school are:

- Possession of an offensive weapon on school premises
- Possession of a bladed/sharply pointed article on school premises
- Threaten a person with an offensive weapon on school premises
- Threaten a person with a blade/sharply pointed article on school premises.
- Threaten a person with the intent to use an offensive weapon

The principal aim of the youth justice system is to prevent and reduce offending by children and young people. The more time and effort invested in dealing with offending behaviour at an early stage will better serve the local community over the longer term.

6. Incident Reporting

Where an immediate police response to an incident at the school is required, dial 999. For example: a student has been detained in possession of a knife on school premises and poses, or is likely to pose, a risk of:

1. Danger to life
2. Use or immediate threat of use, of violence
3. Serious injury to a person
4. Serious damage to property.

When there isn't such an immediate risk, schools should report incidents to the police non-emergency number by dialling 101. For example, a student has been searched and found to be in possession of a knife/bladed instrument which has been seized, and the student does not pose any further risk as detailed above. When reporting incidents of weapons possession to 101, schools should always request and record the incident log reference number. This will facilitate further contact in relation to the incident.

Due to the serious nature of weapons possession and potential consequences, contact should be prompt in order that future risk is managed, and behaviour confronted.

Schools are asked to retain the weapon in a safe place (e.g. school safe) until police attend and seize the weapon for evidential purposes or destruction. Once it is established that a weapon is unlawful, a crime record will be created, and a proportionate investigation will ensue.

All incidents must be recorded on DatabridgeMIS as a "Safeguarding (ELWS)" event and also a "Behavioural" event with the category selected as "Possession of dangerous weapons / implements" selected as the category. All incidents of this nature must be escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Officer.

Actions at the School by the attending Officers

- o Conduct a primary investigation.
- o Manage any risk to the school students and staff.
- o Consult with a senior member of staff at the school.
- o In all cases of unlawful weapon possession, a crime report will be completed, and the weapon seized.
- o The weapon will be assessed as to whether it is unlawful and also on the intent of the person carrying it.

Once it is established that a weapon is unlawful, a crime record will be created, and a proportionate investigation will ensue.

Do the right thing - intervene early to prevent violence, serious injury and reduce future offending.

Please refer to the workflow diagram in appendix 1.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months but can be revised as needed.

Impact of non-compliance

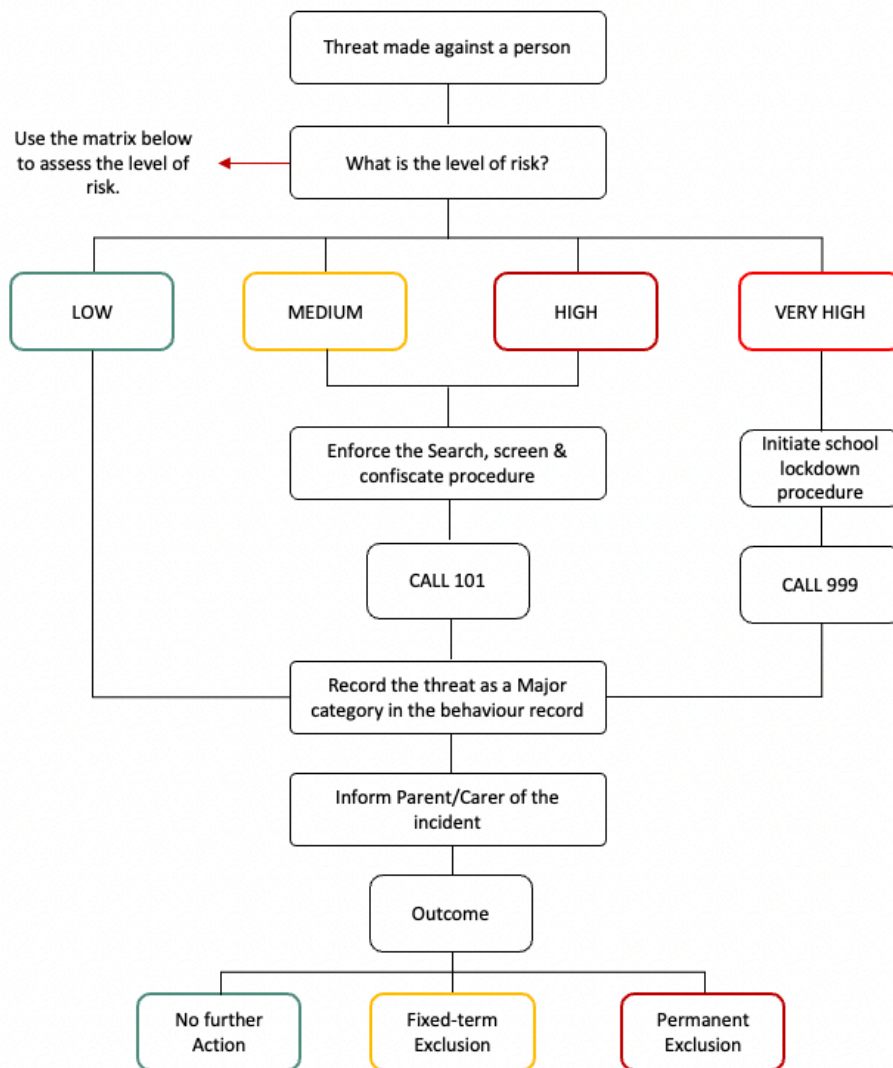
Staff:	Disciplinary action
Student:	Fixed-term exclusion, permanent exclusion, prosecution
Legislation/organisational:	Reputational damage, litigation, statutory and non-regulated compliance. prosecution
Compliance lead:	Corporate Services (Corporate Services)
Policy Reference:	ELWS-POL-ORG-006
Version:	5
Agreed policy location:	DatabridgeMIS and Company Webpage
Does the policy require Governor approval?	No

Approval

Prepared by Scott Roberts (Assoc. CIPD) 04/07/2022  Head of Shared Services	Approved by Tony Brown 04/07/2022  CEO	Counter Signatory Richard King 04/07/2022  Director of Schools, Pre 16 Education
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Version Control

Version	Date	Revision	Review Date
1	04/01/2019	First Issue	03/01/2020
2	01/09/2019	Policy reviewed and transferred onto 2019/20 policy template	31/08/2020
3	01/09/2020	Policy Review	31/08/2021
4	01/09/2021	Reviewed	31/08/2022
5	04/07/2022	Policy reviewed, included threat to staff procedure	03/07/2023



RISK MATRIX

VERY HIGH	Very high risk the student is carrying a weapon and has the intent to use it posing an immediate threat of violence and risk to life
HIGH	Student is suspected to be in possession of a weapon but there is no imminent threat of violence or risk to life
MEDIUM	No weapon suspected to be in the student's possession, however there is a higher probability that the student will bring a weapon into school
LOW	No imminent danger expected with a low probability that the student will not bring a weapon into the school