



Venture  
Learning

## Offensive Weapons Policy

Venture Learning

**Document Owner**

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### **Statement of intent**

Venture Learning recognises the increasing number of school-aged children who are found carrying offensive weapons and acknowledges our duty to ensure that staff and students are safe and that they understand the repercussions of carrying weapons. In addition, Nottingham City and surrounding areas are a particular hotspot for knife crime compared to national statistics and data analysis has shown that incidents of youth violent crime is more prevalent in the hours just before and after school.

### **Through this policy, we will ensure:**

- That the school engages with community groups, parents, and students to understand the impact of any change to relevant local issues
- That the school engages within local contexts (engagement with the local Police, SEIO's, youth services and community groups). This could identify positive and protective activities in your communities for children to engage with.
- That the school works with Neighbourhood Policing Teams to raise concerns about areas in which our students reside.
- That the school outlines the weapons that are legally considered offensive, and the weapons that the school has placed a strict ban on.
- That we establish clear and accurate reporting procedures that can be easily followed by students and staff.
- That we have a clear and robust procedure for investigating any reports, which will be followed accurately and consistently.
- Provide staff with clear management guidelines to follow if a student is found to be carrying a weapon.
- Establish how the school will support and reintegrate students following an incident, wherever possible.
- Outline the school's methods for ensuring students are kept safe from harm.



The policy has been written in conjunction with guidance from Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), Nottinghamshire Police, Education – Access to Learning, Youth Justice Service and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children’s Partnership.

This guidance has been used to ensure we make robust, safe, and proportionate decisions when responding to concerns about offensive weapons on our site.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with that relating to the [Serious Violence Duty](#) and the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire’s Violence Reduction Partnership’s Response Strategy [Serious Violence Response Strategy 2022-25 \(nottsvrp.co.uk\)](#).

## **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Prevention of Crime Act 1953
  - Having an offensive weapon in a public place – section 1
  - Threatening with an offensive weapon in public – section 1A
- Offensive Weapons Act 1996
- Offensive Weapons Act 2019
- Criminal Justice Act 1988
  - Having a bladed or sharply pointed article in a public place – section 139
  - Having a bladed or sharply pointed article on school or further education premises – section 139A
  - Threatening with a bladed article in a public place or on school or further education premises – section 139AA
  - Manufacture, sale or hire, or offer for sale or hire, expose or have in their possession for the purpose of sale or hire, or lending or giving an offensive weapon to any other person – section 141
- European Convention of Human Rights 1953
- Education Act 1996
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012
- Crossbows Acts 1987
- Firearms Act 1968

This policy has due regard to all relevant guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2018) ‘Searching, screening and confiscation’
- Home Office (2012) ‘Knives and offensive weapons information’
- DfE (2025) ‘Keeping children safe in education’
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation (DfE guidance, July 2022 with current GOV.UK updates)
- Behaviour in Schools (DfE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:



- Site Specific Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusion Policy

## Definitions

It is illegal to:

- Sell a knife of any kind to anyone under the age of 18
- Buy a knife under the age of 18
- Carry a knife in public without good reason, e.g. use at work – unless it has a folding blade with a cutting edge three inches long or less, e.g. a Swiss army knife
- Carry, buy or sell a banned knife, e.g. a butterfly knife
- Use any knife or other object in a threatening way (including any legal knife)
- Possess a firearm without a licence
- Possess a corrosive substance in public, without a valid reason
- Sell a corrosive substance to anyone under the age of 18

For the purpose of this policy, an offensive weapon is defined as an article that is made, adapted or intended to cause injury to another person, including mental and physical injury.

For the purpose of this policy, made, adapted or intended is defined as articles that:

- Have been designed to cause harm to another person, e.g. a butterfly knife (made).
- Have been altered to cause harm to another person, e.g. a piece of wood with nails in it (adapted).
- Are being carried with the express purpose to cause harm to another person but are not necessarily an obviously dangerous item, e.g. a cricket bat could be used for sport or to cause injury (intended).

For the purpose of this policy, produced is defined as when a person uses, or threatens someone with, an offensive weapon.

For the purpose of this policy, not produced is defined as when a person has an offensive weapon on their person, but it is not used, including not used to threaten someone.

## Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher/DSL is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy and ensuring that all students are clear on the procedure that will be followed if a report is made that someone is in possession of an offensive weapon
- Ensuring all staff have read and understood the stipulations of this policy
- Investigating any reports of offensive weapons in liaison with the DSL

The SLT are responsible for:



- Monitoring and processing any reports that are made.
- Investigating any reports of offensive weapons in liaison with the Headteacher/DSL.
- Holding assemblies to remind students and staff how to report any concerns confidentially.

All staff are responsible for:

- Reading and understanding the stipulations in this policy
- Making offensive weapons reports, if they have any suspicions about any member of the school community

Staff will be alert to indicators of serious violence, including:

- Increased absence from education
- Changes in friendships or peer associations
- Increased aggression
- Possession of unexplained items or money
- Signs of exploitation
- Involvement in carrying weapons
- Association with gangs or organised crime groups
- 
- Concerns will be recorded and referred through safeguarding procedures

Students are responsible for:

- Adhering to the provisions of this policy in terms of not having prohibited items on their person.
- Speaking to a member of staff if they have any suspicions that someone is carrying an offensive weapon.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring their children understand the repercussions of carrying an offensive item in a public place, including a school.
- Informing the school if they are concerned about their child's behaviour or safety, in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Understanding the repercussions of carrying an offensive weapon themselves.

## **Offensive weapons list**

The following items are banned by law, regardless of their intended use:

- Flick knives
- Butterfly knives
- Disguised knives
- Belt buckle knives
- Push daggers
- Gravity knives
- 'Airport' or stealth knives
- Sword-sticks



- Samurai swords
- Knuckle-dusters
- Hand-claws
- Foot-claws
- Blowpipes or guns
- Hollow kubotan
- Shuriken
- Telescopic truncheons
- Kusari-gama
- Kyoketsu shoge
- Kusari
- Straight, side handled or fiction-lock truncheons – also known as a baton
- A sword with a curved blade of 50 centimetres or over in length
- Bump stocks.

As outlined in the Crossbows Act 1987, crossbows are prohibited under the age of 18

Firearms are also considered prohibited items. Firearms include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Starting pistols
- Air guns
- Any type of replica or toy gun

The police will be contacted immediately if any student is found to be in possession of any of the above items. The school will support the police in any investigations as far as possible, e.g. providing information. The police's decision regarding the student will be final.

The maximum penalty for carrying an offensive weapon is four years imprisonment, a fine or both.

The maximum penalty for possessing a corrosive substance in a public place without a valid reason is four years imprisonment, a fine or both.

In addition to the above, the school also considers the following items to be prohibited:

- Fireworks
- Laser pens
- Paintball guns
- Tasers
- Lighters and matches

Any student found to be in possession of an item listed in paragraph 4.7 may be immediately excluded from the school, in accordance with the school's Exclusion Policy.

## Reporting procedure

The DSL and the DDSL will investigate any reports made from students .



Upon receiving a report, the Headteacher/DSL and the DDSL will be responsible for liaising with the commissioning school of the student and investigating the report.

If a report is made regarding a parent, the DSL will call the police immediately – the school will not investigate this report; however:

- The parent may be banned from the school premises until the police investigation has been completed
- Social services may be informed of the investigation

If a report is made regarding a staff member, the Headteacher/DSL and DDSL will use their professional judgement to determine whether to:

- Hold a meeting with the staff member to investigate the allegation; or
- Call the police

If a member of the public is on the school site with a weapon, the school's Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy will be followed.

### **Investigation procedure**

When a report of a student who may be carrying an offensive weapon is made, the Headteacher/DSL and DDSL will promptly risk assess the situation, determining:

- Where the student can be located
- What risks their surroundings are likely to pose, e.g. a confined space resulting in close proximity to other students
- Where the student is likely to be carrying the offensive weapon, e.g. on their person or in their bag

Once the student has been located and the Headteacher/DSL and DDSL have risk assessed the situation, two members of trained staff will be asked to escort the student to a safe location, e.g. the office.

Once the student is in a safe location, the Headteacher/DSL will contact the student's parents and invite them to the school. They will be informed why they are being invited to the school by the Headteacher/DSL, who will remain calm and unaccusing.

Under the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Code, searches are defined as follows:

- a) Jacket outer coat and gloves (JOG) – a search involving no removal of clothing other than an outer coat, jacket or gloves.  
([PACE Code A, paragraph 3.5](#))
- b) More thorough search (MTS) – a search involving the removal of more than JOG but not revealing intimate parts of the body. ([PACE Code A, paragraph 3.6](#))
- c) Search exposing intimate parts of the body (EIP) – a search involving the removal of more than JOG that exposes intimate parts of the body. ([PACE Code A, paragraph 3.7](#))

If conducting a search, staff will ensure the following:



- That there are two members of staff in the room.
- That the search is conducted discreetly.
- That you explain the purpose of the search to the student.
- Record the name of the person requesting the search and the reasons for the search.
- Record the time, date and location, and nature of the search (as defined above) and any items found. Please then ensure that this is recorded on your safeguarding system, even if you do not find anything during the search.
- Inform parents/carers that a search has taken place and clearly explain the reasons for it.

If, following a search no items are found, you still have reasonable suspicion, please consider why, and record the reasons.

If a child refuses to be searched, but you have reasonable grounds to suspect they are in possession of a weapon, or a weapon may have been hidden off site or in the educational setting call 101.

### **Strip searches**

School staff will not undertake strip searches.

Where a search involving the exposure of intimate parts is considered necessary, the police must be contacted.

The school will follow DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance and safeguarding procedures before, during and after any police-led strip search.

The DSL will be informed immediately and appropriate aftercare support provided.

### **Management of students**

If no weapon has been found after the student's bag and outer clothing has been searched, the Headteacher/DSL will use a metal detector wand to search the student.

If still no weapon has been found, the Headteacher/DSL will thank the student and their parents for cooperating, answer any questions (where appropriate, e.g. maintaining confidentiality by not informing parents of who raised the report) and send the student back to class.

If the Headteacher/DSL searches the student and discovers a weapon, they will use their professional judgement to determine:

- What kind of weapon it is, e.g. an offensive weapon or a school-banned item
- The likely intention to cause harm
- The context of the situation, including the student's educational history, bullying and behavioural records, and any explanations that the student can provide



If a potential weapon is found, the Headteacher/DSL and DDSL will use their professional judgement in considering whether to call the police. For example:

- If the student brings in an offensive weapon, e.g. a samurai sword, the police will be called immediately
- If a student brings in a Swiss army knife, the school will establish the context of the situation before making a decision

The Headteacher/DSL will keep a record of all searches that have been conducted, which will be logged on CPOMS.

The school understands the negative effect that exclusion can have on students and will do everything within its power to support, protect and help students; however, will follow the procedures within the Behaviour Policy where necessary.

If a weapon of any description is produced and used to threaten, physically or mentally, or harm another person, the Headteacher/DSL will call the police immediately.

While waiting for the police to arrive, staff will understand and adhere to the following procedure:

- Staff will ensure their own and students' safety
- Staff will do all they can to contain the student, e.g. in a classroom; however, staff will not risk their own safety
- Staff will try to calm the student down
- Staff will ensure they keep a safe distance between themselves and the student and they will try to keep items in between themselves and the student, e.g. desks
- Staff will never put themselves at risk

If a student has produced a weapon, the school's positive handling policy will be void and staff will wait for the police to arrive.

If someone is attacked with an offensive weapon, the emergency services (police and ambulance) will be called immediately and the school will cooperate with the police's decision, e.g. regarding punishments.

Following any incident where a weapon has been produced, this policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher/DSL and the DDSL.

## **Safeguarding**

The school recognises that risks associated with weapon carrying may occur outside the home and may be linked to peer groups, exploitation, gangs, serious violence, county lines, online influences and community environments. Staff will consider contextual safeguarding factors when assessing risk and planning support.

In line with 'Keeping children safe in education', the school has a duty to protect students from harm.

The school will conduct annual surveys to establish whether students feel safe, how students could be made to feel safer and to ensure students understand the school's reporting procedures.



The school will hold awareness days in which students will learn about what it means legally to carry or threaten someone with a weapon.

The school will invite local law enforcement officers into the school to give assemblies on the dangers of carrying an offensive weapon.

The school will provide students with a range of PSHE lessons/assemblies to raise awareness of the dangers of offensive weapons.

The school uses hand-held metal detector wands to identify students who are carrying weapons.

All students and parents will be made aware of the school's reporting procedures and the school's commitment to protecting the school community.

The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be adhered to by all staff, parents and students.

The school will ensure raising awareness on the dangers of offensive weapons is part of the PSHE curriculum.

Students will have read and understood the school's home school agreement.

All staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Some areas of vulnerability that a child may experience are highlighted below, but should not be seen as a comprehensive list. It is important to note that most children with vulnerabilities do not commit offences.

However, the challenges that children with vulnerabilities experience can sometimes contribute to behaviours which may lead them to unwittingly commit offences. All school staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan)
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol use, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- are using drugs or alcohol themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is a privately fostered child
- is a child in care
- has experienced recent trauma i.e. bereavement



Education settings will already be taking action to prevent incidents of offensive weapons being brought into school if they are adhering to statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) through clear policies, practices and wider culture of vigilance.

## **Monitoring and review**

The Headteacher/DSL and DDSL will review this policy on an annual basis.

Any changes made to this policy will be immediately communicated to all employees, students and parents.

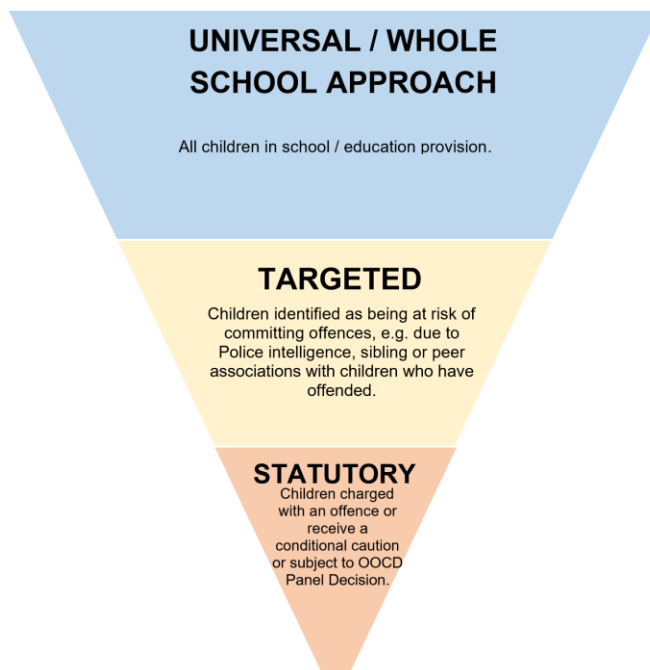
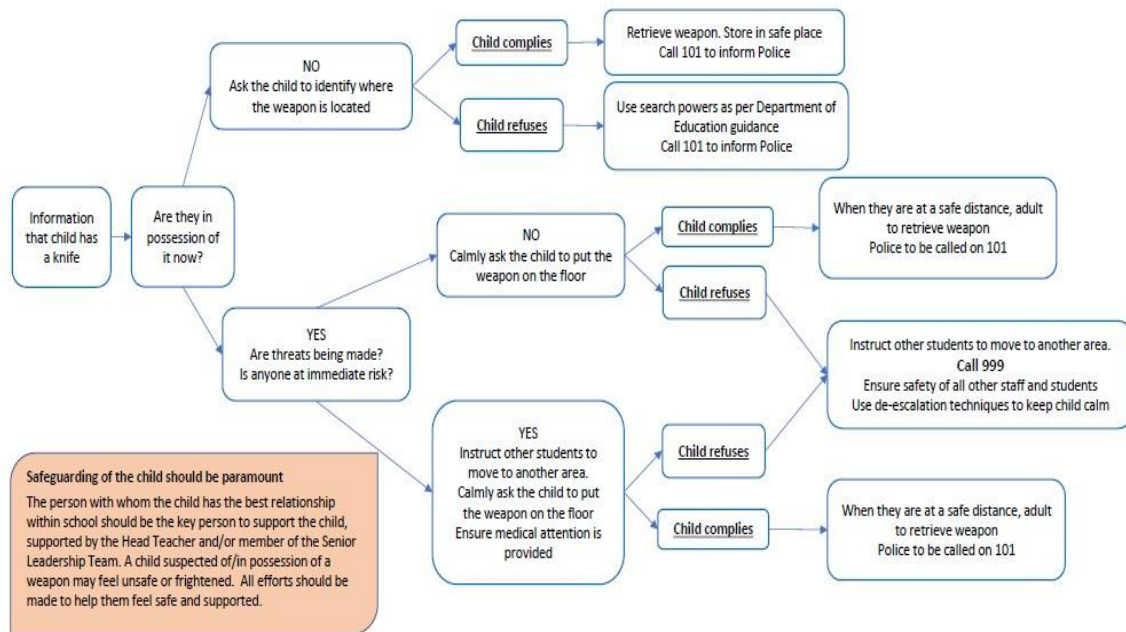
## **Practice and Resources**

Following any incident and initial notification to the police, school will take action to ensure that children are appropriately safeguarded, and potential risks are sufficiently managed. The priority for school is to safeguard the child(ren) within their setting.

Routes for additional support and guidance that will be considered and discussed:

- Convene a meeting with parents, key person, and Head Teacher to discuss the incident, explore any risks/support needs and agree future actions. The child should be included in discussions and development of any support plans and future actions.
- Where additional support is required, and safeguarding concerns identified including those relating to child exploitation, consider a MASH referral.
- Speak to the Schools and Early Intervention Officer (SEIO) to explore if they can offer any support/guidance or are aware of any other information/intelligence which needs to be taken into consideration. [SEIOs@notts.police.uk](mailto:SEIOs@notts.police.uk).
- Where there are ongoing concerns regarding the child being at risk of repeating such behaviour consider making a referral to the Youth Justice Service for preventative intervention.
- Consider if a referral to VictimCARE is required to support the victim and witnesses of the those impacted upon by the incident. VictimCARE contact details are: [admin.notts@catch22.cjsm.net](mailto:admin.notts@catch22.cjsm.net).
- Where there are ongoing concerns for a child's emotional health and well-being consider referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Education Psychology Service, Behaviour and Emotional Health Team (BEH), Mental Health Support Team (MHST).





- A whole school approach is recommended utilising the curriculum to address this. This could take the form of classroom activities, assemblies, Mandatory PHSE/RSHE lessons or themed days.
- Visiting the Ben Kinsella Choices and Consequences exhibition at the National Justice Museum. Staff briefings and training are available.

Bespoke and specialist preventative intervention could take the form of

- Smaller group sessions by Schools Early Intervention Officers or Neighbourhood Officer.
- Referral to the Youth Justice Service (YJS) for prevention and diversionary intervention on a 1:1 or group basis.

Police and YJS involvement for children subject to Out of Court Disposals or Court Orders.

