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Offensive Weapons Policy Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School

Policy Statement

At Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School we believe that ensuring health and safety of students/young people, staff and visitors is an integral part of school/setting life. It plays a vital part in ensuring we are a place where students/young people will develop and grow.

Unfortunately, the carrying of offensive weapons appears to be becoming more common within society, therefore it is important that Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School recognises this and takes appropriate steps to limit any risk from such items within the school.

It is an offence under section 139A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (as inserted by the Offensive Weapons Act 1996) to carry an offensive weapon or knife on school premises. The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 Section 45 gives Headteachers, and in any school, other staff so authorised by the Headteacher, the power to search students for concealed weapons without consent.

It is also an offence to carry an offensive weapon or knife in a public place unless a person has a good reason or lawful authority for having this with them.

Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School is clear that every employee and young person has the right to be treated with dignity and respect and that assaults on staff or young people whether verbal or physical are not acceptable. Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School will promote measures to deter violence, threatening behaviour, abuse or other unacceptable behaviour towards staff and young people and will where necessary take appropriate action against any individuals responsible for such acts.

The following sets out the position of Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School in relation to offensive weapons on site and any activity organised by Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School whether on or off site including off site visits and activities.

Definition of offensive weapon

At Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School offensive weapons are defined:

Legal definition of an offensive weapon in the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 which is “**any article made or adapted for causing injury to the person, or intended by the person having it with him/her for such use by him/her**”.

It includes but is not limited to:

- A firearm of any description including starting pistols, air guns, ball bearing guns, paintball guns and replica guns
- Knives including all variations of bladed objects eg. pocket knives, craft knives, etc
- Pyrotechnics including fireworks, smoke bombs, hand held and distress flares
- Laser pens and pointers
- Paintball guns
- Tasers
- Lighters and matches
- Other objects, even if manufactured for a non-violent purpose but which have a potentially violent use ie. **the purpose of carrying the object is for use, or threat of use as a weapon** (such items could include such things as scissors, nail files, bats, sticks, chisels, screwdrivers, hammers, and other tools, etc.).

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.

Reporting procedure

The school will implement and monitor an anonymous reporting procedure that is available to students, staff and the wider community. The anonymous reporting procedure can be found on the school's website, which is available here: <https://swgflwhisper.org.uk/report/DRO3>

The Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher will monitor any reports made via the anonymous reporting form. If a report is made regarding a parent/carer, the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher will call the police immediately – the school will not investigate this report; however:

- The parent/carer 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 and chair of governors 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 Lockdown procedure will be followed.

The position of Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School in respect of offensive weapons:

Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School has a policy of zero tolerance towards offensive weapons on its site or activities, as such, no student or member of the public is to bring any such item on to the site or to an activity.

Notwithstanding the above, it is recognised that in order for Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School to function, a variety of objects mentioned above will need to be used for educational or other purposes. These will only be supplied and managed by staff from Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School who are responsible for supervising their issue, use and collection and who will make sure they are all accounted for at the end of each lesson/activity and are securely stored when not in use.

It is also recognised that within certain elements of the Sikh religion there is a specific requirement to wear a Kirpan as part of the religion. The position of Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School in relation to the wearing of a Kirpan will be that either a replica Kirpan should be worn in school or that a Kirpan should be adapted such that the blade cannot be withdrawn and it should be worn in a sheath underneath clothing. This is seen as a sensible compromise allowing the religious beliefs of the student to be respected without putting other students at risk. The school is aware that this has been a compromise which has been agreed, used and worked well previously within Derbyshire. If this situation occurs at Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School this will be discussed specifically with the individual student and their parent/carers. It should be noted however that if a sensible compromise cannot be reached; then the safety of all students and young people will be the first and overriding concern of Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School and this will mean that a Kirpan will not be allowed into school where it could cause serious injury.

Investigation procedure

In the event that it is suspected that anyone is in possession of an offensive weapon the Headteacher or their authorised deputies will be summoned to assess the situation and take control. The Headteacher or their authorised deputy will decide on whether or not the incident is innocent in nature and can be dealt with under the disciplinary policy or if the police will need to be called.

The Headteacher and/or authorised deputies 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 such as the changing rooms 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
- If the student needs to be isolated. This may involve moving other students away from the area

Once the student has been located and the Headteacher and authorised deputies have risk assessed the situation, two members of trained staff will be asked to escort the student to a

safe location, e.g. the Headteacher's office. **If a weapon of any description has been produced and used to threaten, physically or mentally, or harm another person, the Headteacher will call the police immediately.**

The following actions will then be implemented as necessary.

- The Headteacher or their authorised deputy, in the presence of another member of staff, will if it can be done in a safe and controlled manner, ask the student to pass the item to them or disclose where it is located, and the student will be questioned if safe to do so
- Any weapon recovered will be removed by the authorised person and locked securely away until it can be passed to the police
- Where the student refuses to co-operate staff will not be expected to undertake searches of students. The police will be called and asked to carry out a search
- The student/young person's parent/carers will be called. They will be informed why they are being invited into school by the Headteacher, who will remain calm and unaccusing
- The student's parent/carers will be present when the Headteacher discusses the concern with the student. If they cannot be present, another member of pastoral staff will be present
- The Chair of Governors will be notified
- An incident report will be completed and made available to the police if requested
- An investigation will be carried out by Headteacher or their authorised deputy into the incident to determine what disciplinary measures/sanctions will need to be imposed
- Copies of any report and forms will be kept at the setting and a copy also sent to the Children's Services Health and Safety Section

If no weapon is found following discussion or a search:

- If no weapon has been found after the student's bag and outer clothing has been searched, the Headteacher will use a metal detector wand to search the student.
- If still no weapon has been found, the Headteacher will thank the student and their parent/carers for cooperating, answer any questions (where appropriate, e.g. maintaining confidentiality by not informing parent/carers of who raised the report) and send the student back to class.

NB. For any incidents involving visitors to the site where an offensive weapon is involved or an alleged offensive weapon is suspected the police will be called.

IN THESE SITUATIONS IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL STAFF TO MOVE STUDENTS TO A POSITION OF SAFETY UNTIL THE POLICE ARRIVE AND TAKE CHARGE OF THE SITUATION. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL'S LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE WILL BE CONSIDERED. 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 DECISIONS.

Staff will be given sufficient information and instruction relating to the expectations of management regarding this.

Confiscated Items

If the Headteacher 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 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 deciding.

At the discretion of the Headteacher, where they decide that the circumstances of the incident were innocent, a confiscated item may be returned directly to a parent/carer who will be required to sign for its receipt and that the item will not be brought back into school. This will normally take place when other young people are not on the site. It will be kept in a secure place until collection.

(NB weapons such as flick knives, knuckle dusters etc that are per se offensive will **not** be returned under any circumstances)

Discipline/sanctions

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, permanent exclusion will be considered if a student is found to be in possession of an offensive weapon.

Reintegration

While the school never condones carrying a weapon, we understand that there are many reasons as to why a student may feel the need to carry a weapon, e.g. they are being bullied. If a student who has been found to be in possession of a weapon remains at the school, the HPL (House Progress Leader) will be responsible for supporting and monitoring the student.

The HPL will establish the student's reasons for carrying a weapon and will put appropriate support systems in place. The HPL will hold weekly meetings with the student to monitor their safety and wellbeing until the HPL is satisfied with the student's wellbeing. Carrying a weapon can be an indicator of a safeguarding concern, e.g. county lines exploitation or neglect, and the HPL will investigate any concerns and make a referral to the appropriate body, e.g. the police, if appropriate. Other students will not be informed that the student was suspected of carrying a weapon. The student's parent/carers will, if appropriate, be involved in the reintegration plan. The school will offer counselling services to the student, if appropriate.

Safeguarding

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

The school will:

- conduct regular 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.

- awareness days in which students will learn about what it means legally to carry or threaten someone with a weapon.
- invite local law enforcement officers into the school to give assemblies on the dangers of carrying an offensive weapon.
- use hand-held metal detector wands to identify students who are carrying weapons.
- ensure students and parent/carers will be made aware of the school's reporting procedures and the school's commitment to protecting the school community – parent/carers will receive a letter annually.
- ensure raising awareness on the dangers of offensive weapons is part of the PSHE curriculum.

The school understands that certain students are likely to be more at risk than others in terms of carrying a knife. Staff will be aware that the following characteristics may make a student more susceptible to carrying an offensive weapon:

- Disadvantaged backgrounds
- Students with SEND, e.g. they are more susceptible to county lines or gang exploitation
- Students from difficult family situations
- Children at risk of criminal exploitation
- Severely bullied students

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher, governing board and DSL will review this policy on an annual basis. Following any incident where a weapon has been produced, this policy will be reviewed by the SLT team and Headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2022. Any changes made to this policy will be immediately communicated to all employees, students and parents/carers.

Managing Offensive Weapon Reports Flowchart

This flowchart outlines what schools should do if a report of a student carrying an offensive weapon is raised.

If appropriate, call the student's parents/carers and invite them to the school. Inform them why they are being invited to the school, ensuring you remain calm and unaccusing. **Do not wait for parents/carers to arrive at the school before moving the student to a safe location.**

Move the student to a safe location, e.g. the Headteacher's office. When asking the pupil to come with you, do not act confrontational or judgemental.

Explain to the student, and their parents/carers if they're present, why you need to speak with them.

Ask the student if you can search their bag and outer clothing. School staff have the authority to do this; however, asking for permission is less confrontational.

If no weapon has been found upon searching the student's bag and outer clothing, use a knife detector wand to search the student.

If an offensive weapon is found, you should use your professional judgement to determine what's next. You should:

- Establish what kind of weapon it is, e.g. butterfly knife or pen knife.
- Assess the potential intention to cause harm.
- Remember context, including the student's educational history, any reports of bullying, and explanations that the pupil can provide.

The police do not always need to be called. Have confidence in your policies to establish if you can support the student.



If no weapon has been found, you have not been accusing, judgemental or inappropriate, thank the student for cooperating and allow them to return to their class. If not informed/present, parents/carers should be informed about the search taking place.



Keep a record of the search.
Do not discount the student in the future – if more reports are made, continue to investigate them.