



Joseph Leckie Academy

Weapons Policy

This policy is reviewed annually

History of Document

Approved by Governors: December 2020
Review date for Document: December 2021

Joseph Leckie Academy aims to provide a positive and healthy environment for students and staff; free from any form of violence involving weapon(s), implement or materials (of any kind), that might be carried, intended, adapted or threatened to be used; or indeed used to actually cause harm, injury or intimidation to any other person(s).

1. Aims

1.1 Joseph Leckie Academy acknowledges our duty to ensure that students and staff are safe and that students understand the repercussions of carrying weapons. We understand that students may at times encounter conflict with other persons at some point during their personal lives or whilst at school. However, this does not excuse or permit weapons, of any kind being carried, stored, hidden, transported passed or concealed at any time on Academy site.

1.2 The safety of all staff and students is paramount and as such offensive weapons are expressly forbidden from the Academy site and all Academy activities, wherever they may be taking place.

1.3 Through this policy, we aim to:

- Outline weapons that are legally considered offensive, and those the Academy strictly bans.
- Establish clear and accurate reporting procedures that can be easily followed by students and staff.
- Outline procedures for investigation, which will be followed accurately and consistently.
- Provide staff with management guidelines to follow if a student is found to be carrying a weapon.
- Outline methods for ensuring students are kept safe from harm including the preventative strategies and education, including the potential consequences for breaching this policy.
- Establish how the Academy will support and reintegrate students

2. Legal framework

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

- DfE (2018) 'Searching, screening and confiscation'
- Home Office (2012) 'Knives and offensive weapons information'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'

2.2 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
- 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

3. Definitions

3.1 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.

3.2 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. an otherwise inoffensive object that has been sharpened to form a point (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).

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

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

4. Roles and responsibilities:

4.1 The Principal and designated staff are 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

4.2 The DSL is responsible for:

- Monitoring, reporting and processing any reports that are made and liaising with the Police and LA as required.
- Investigating any reports of offensive weapons in liaison with the Principal or designated staff
- Giving regular reminders to students and staff of how to make anonymous offensive weapons reports, should they feel uncomfortable speaking to staff. This could be via the Academy's Sharp System or passing a note to a staff member so that the student does not need to say anything.

4.3 All staff are responsible for:

- Reading and understanding the stipulations in this policy
- Taking part in any offensive weapons training that is organised through the Academy
- Making offensive weapons reports, if they have any suspicions about any member of the Academy community

4.4 Students are responsible for:

- Adhering to the provisions of this policy in terms of not having prohibited items on their person on Academy site, trips, visits, or travelling to and from site.

- Informing a member of staff or completing an anonymous entry via the SHARP System if they have any suspicions or concerns that someone is carrying an offensive weapon.
- Not handling, passing, carrying any form of weapon, nor picking up any item, without first informing a member of staff and reporting immediately anyone who asks them to do so
- Informing a member of staff immediately, if a weapon is seen, or is known to be either on site, on a person, hidden or stashed on site or around the perimeter of the site, or in proximity of the Academy i.e. hidden but away from the Academy premises.
- Making informed decisions about the legal implications of carrying any banned item

4.5 Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring their children understand the repercussions and consequences of carrying an offensive item in a public place, including a school.
- Informing the Academy 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.

5. Offensive Weapons List

5.1 Below are some examples of weapons banned by law, regardless of their intended use. Possession may carry an immediate prison sentence:

- Flick knives
- Butterfly (Balisong) knives
- Gravity knives
- Samurai swords
- Knuckle-dusters
- Telescopic truncheons
- 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

5.2 All firearms are banned/prohibited items. Firearms include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any item deemed to be classified as a firearm
- Starting pistols
- Air guns
- Any type of replica or toy gun

5.3 **The Police will be contacted immediately if any student is found to be in possession of any of the illegal items listed above.** The Academy will support the Police in any investigations as far as possible, e.g. providing student information.

The Academy will treat such incidents very seriously and apply any of the full range of sanctions, **up to and including permanent exclusion.**

5.4 The maximum penalty for possessing a corrosive substance in a public place without a valid reason is four years' imprisonment, a fine or both. The Academy will treat such incident very seriously and apply any of the full range of sanctions, up to and including permanent exclusion.

5.5 In addition to the above, the Academy also prohibits other items, these include but are not limited to:

- Fireworks; Laser pens; Paintball guns and pellets; Tasers; BB Guns; Air Guns; Flares; Catapults; Slings
- Other types of offensive weapons or weapons of offence will include lengths of pipe, bats, other blunt instruments
- Other items judged by the Principal to be carried with the intention to inflict injury on another individual – this would include blades removed from pencil sharpeners, etc.

Any student found to be in possession of an item listed above will have them confiscated in line with the searching, screening and confiscation policy.

6. Sanctions

6.1 A range of sanctions may be applied (up to and including permanent exclusion). These include, but are not limited to:

- **Permanent Exclusion (see 11)**
- **Police Involvement**
- **Governors Disciplinary Hearing**
- **Leadership Disciplinary Hearing**
- **Managed Move** to another school for a fresh start
- **Fixed Term Exclusion** (usually 1- 5 days but in exceptional circumstances this may be longer pending further investigation and to establish mitigating circumstances). This may still lead to a Permanent Exclusion.
- **Internal Exclusion** used pending further investigation to establish the facts and any mitigating circumstances prior to deciding on an appropriate sanction.
- **Reintegration with Conditions**, where a student returns from a Fixed term or the Principal decides not to Permanently exclude following a student being found in possession and/or producing an offensive weapon a Risk Assessment and conditions may well be in place. This might include agreement to search randomly, isolations within a school day or other loss of privileges.
- **Detention**
- **Parental Contact**, at all stages above
- **Confiscation** in all cases

7. Reporting Procedure

7.1 The Academy encourages anyone to report any concerns they may have that put the safety of students or other people at risk and monitors an anonymous reporting procedure that is available to students, staff and the wider community.

7.2 The anonymous reporting procedure can be completed by inputting details through the SHARP system which is linked from the Academy website. Alternatively, an anonymous note can be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or any member of the leadership team. The Principal, DSL, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and leadership team will monitor any reports which are made.

At the start of each term, the Principal, DSL, Leadership Team (LT) will remind all students and staff how they can make anonymous reports. Upon receiving a report, the Principal will be responsible for informing the Chair of Governors and the designated Safeguarding Governor and investigating the report.

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

- The parent may be banned from the Academy site until the Police investigation has been completed
- Social services may be informed of the investigation

7.4 If a report is made regarding a staff member, the Principal, DSL 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

7.5 If a member of the public is on the Academy site with a weapon, all students and staff will be directed to remain in a safe place and the Academy will follow the emergency lockdown procedures.

8. Investigation Procedure

8.1 When a report of a student who may be carrying an offensive weapon is made, the Principal/designated staff and DSL should 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

8.2 Where the student is likely to be carrying the offensive weapon, e.g. on their person or in their bag:

- i. Once the student has been located and the Principal, DSL, or LT have risk assessed the situation, two members of staff will be asked to escort the student to a safe location, e.g. the Principal's office or safe area where the student will not feel 'penned-in'. If it is not possible to escort the student to a safe area, all other students and/or other staff will be removed from the vicinity.
- ii. Once the student is in a safe location, the Principal or designated staff, DSL may contact the student's parents and invite them to the Academy.
- iii. Once the student's parents have been contacted the Principal or designated staff will make a judgement as to whether to wait for their arrival to discuss the concern with the student and/or to commence a search.
- iv. When the Principal or designated staff member discusses their concerns with the student, they will not be confrontational or judgemental.

- v. If the students' parents are not present to discuss the concern another member of staff will be present. Ideally of the same sex as the student involved in order to witness a search of outer clothing and bags. Please refer to the Academy Searching, screening and confiscation policy. An agreed and voluntary search should be attempted in the first instance.

8.3 If no weapon has been found after the student's bag and outer clothing has been searched, a metal detector wand may be used to search the student.

If no weapon has been found, the member of staff will thank the student/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 colleague 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 an item that may cause harm
- 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

8.4 If any weapon is found, (either made/adapted or intended), the Principal in consultation with the DSL 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 smaller or banned item, e.g. Swiss army knife, the Academy will establish the context of the situation before making a decision as to whether to inform the Police.

The Academy understands the negative effect that exclusion can have on students and will do everything within its power to support, protect and help students; however, possession of an offensive weapon is likely to result in a fixed term exclusion; and depending on the context - a permanent exclusion is possible.

8.5 If a weapon of any description is produced and used to threaten, physically or mentally, or harm another person, the Principal, DSL or designated staff will call the Police immediately.

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

- Staff and students will be instructed to move to, or remain in, a safe space
- 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

8.6 If someone is attacked with an offensive weapon, the emergency services (Police and ambulance) will be called immediately and the Academy will cooperate with the Police's investigation and decision making

Following any incident where a weapon has been produced, this policy will be reviewed by the Principal/AP Pastoral/DSL.

The Academy's Searching, Screening and Confiscation policy will be adhered to at all times.

9. Reintegration

9.1 The Academy never condones carrying a weapon, however we understand that there are sometimes factors where a child may feel worried or scared. In such instances the child should report the issue, rather than take matters into their own hands. Should a student who has been found to be in possession of a weapon remain at the Academy, the DSL or DDSL will be responsible for supporting and monitoring the student. The DSL or DDSL will be responsible for producing and regularly reviewing an individual risk assessment for the student.

- i. The DSL or DDSL will establish the student's reasons for carrying a weapon and will put appropriate support systems in place.
- ii. The DSL or DDSL will hold meetings with the student and parents to monitor their safety and wellbeing until satisfied with the student's wellbeing. Programmes of work may be followed internally or externally.
- iii. Carrying a weapon can be an indicator of a safeguarding concern, e.g. county lines exploitation or neglect, and the DSL or DDSL will investigate any concerns and make a referral to the appropriate body, where appropriate.
- iv. Other students will not be informed that the student was suspected of carrying a weapon.
- v. The student's parents will be involved in the reintegration and support process.

10. Safeguarding and Prevention

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

The Academy will conduct annual surveys to establish whether students feel safe, how students could be made to feel safer and to ensure students understand the Academy's reporting procedures and will ensure that through the PSHE/PDP curriculum, students will learn about what it means legally to carry or threaten someone with a weapon.

10.2 The Academy will work with other agencies e.g. the Police to hold sessions raising the awareness of the dangers of carrying an offensive weapon. This may be through knife arches, wands, live educational presentations or video presentations to students. Small group or one to one work would also support improved choices.

Staff or the Police may use hand-held metal detector wands to screen students on entry to the Academy and may be used to identify anyone who is in possession of weapons.

10.3 All students and parents will be made aware of the Academy reporting procedures and our commitment to protecting the Academy community, parents will receive a letter annually.

10.4 The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be adhered to by all staff, parents and students. All staff will receive annual updates including de-escalation techniques, lockdown and evacuation procedures, and searching, screening and confiscation procedures.

10.5 The Academy understands that certain students are likely to be more at risk than others in terms of carrying a knife or other weapons.

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
- Severely bullied students

10.6 Students will be reminded regularly that there are severe sanctions for the carrying, handling, using of weapons will normally be fixed term exclusion in the first instance, pending investigation. A permanent exclusion may follow depending upon the circumstances, severity of incident, seriousness of weapon and any mitigating factors.

11. Permanent Exclusion

11.1 A decision to exclude a student permanently may be taken:

- in response to a serious or persistent breaches of this policy
- where allowing the student to remain in Academy would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the Academy.

The Principal will make the judgement, in exceptional circumstances, where it is appropriate to permanently exclude a child for a first or 'one-off' offence for carrying an offensive weapon and / or producing a weapon whether used or not.

The Principal will give the student the opportunity to present their case before making the decision to permanently exclude.

11.2 Pre-permanent Exclusion Meeting

Before the Principal makes the decision whether or not to move to permanent exclusion, parents and the student will be invited into the Academy to meet and discuss the incident, to offer their side of the incident (as statement may not have been possible at the time). This meeting may be to inform parents of the possible decision to move to permanent exclusion and the student and parents will be asked if there are any mitigating factors, or facts that the Principal should know, prior to making the decision to move to permanent exclusion.

Following the meeting, the Principal will make a decision as to whether the Academy will pursue a permanent exclusion for the incident.

This will take into account: all evidence gathered, the item in question, the events around the incident, the severity of threat, the statements gained from witnesses, staff, and students. As well as taking into account the points made in the parental meeting above.

All statements will be handed to the Principal's PA.

Where a student is not permanently excluded, the incident will be recorded on the student's file and will be part of future referrals and evidence towards subsequent permanent exclusion decisions.