

CIRENCESTER KINGSHILL SCHOOL

WEAPONS POLICY

It is an arrestable offence for any person to carry an offensive weapon on any school premises. It is not an offence to carry a folding pocketknife. However, in the interests of the safety and security of all Kingshill pupils and staff, **the carrying of offensive weapons of any shape or size, including a folding pocketknife, is STRICTLY FORBIDDEN on the school premises.** An offensive weapon can be defined as any article made or adapted to injure a person or any article intended for such use.

This policy also includes the possession of any other item, not necessarily defined by law as an offensive weapon, but which could be used to cause harm to another individual.

Head teachers, and staff they authorise, now have the power to search pupils without consent where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil has an offensive weapon (Section 550AA, Education Act 1996: inserted by Section 45, Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006). However, at Kingshill, we regard this power to be the duty of the police who would be called in the event of a pupil's refusal to cooperate. Further clarification can be found in DFE searching, screening and confiscation, February 2014.

Staff Involvement where a weapon is suspected:

If a pupil is brandishing a weapon in an aggressive manner, every attempt should be made to evacuate other pupils and staff from that area. Under no circumstances should a member of staff confront the offending pupil nor in any way put him or herself at risk. The police should be called as a matter of urgency.

If a pupil is suspected of having a weapon in their possession, a member of the Senior Leadership Team should be alerted immediately.

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. Alternatively other pupils should be removed from the area.

Where there is reasonable belief that a pupil may be carrying a weapon, it might be appropriate for a pupil, who is calm and relaxed and who has agreed to co-operate, to empty his or her own pockets/bag. A pupil may also be asked to remove outer clothing such as a coat, jacket or pullover, but they should not be asked to remove outer wear – e.g. trousers, skirt, socks, tights etc. If a pupil offers to remove any of these the offer should be declined. Any of the above must be in the presence of another member of staff (at least one of the members of staff must be of the same sex as the pupil).

If there remains reasonable suspicion that the pupil may have hidden a weapon on his/her person or somewhere on the premises, or if the pupil refuses to cooperate, the pupil should be isolated from other pupils and then further advice should be sought from the police.

Where the person suspected of carrying a weapon is not a registered Kingshill pupil, or the incident takes place outside the school premises, the police must always be contacted as a matter of urgency.

If, in the judgement of the most senior member of staff available, the circumstances would appear to be innocent and there is no evidence of the use of the article as an offensive weapon, the matter can

be dealt with on a disciplinary basis. This may result in a fixed term exclusion. If there is any doubt, then the police should be called.

Weapons confiscated by school:

If a member of staff takes possession of a weapon brought to school, the item should immediately be taken to a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will secure it in a locked cupboard.

When school staff find and seize a weapon which they suspect is illegal, a senior member of staff should promptly inform the police. Since staff must pass the seized weapon to the police, they should ask if the police are willing to collect it from the school. The police, when they learn of the alleged offence, might also wish to come to the school to question the pupil from whom the weapon was seized. If this is the case, the pupil should be isolated from other pupils until the police arrive.

Records

If a pupil is found in possession of an offensive weapon on school premises they are committing an offence. Therefore, it is possible that the pupil will be arrested by the police, and staff members involved will become witnesses in any prosecution. Consequently, it is essential that accurate records are kept.

Informing parents/carers

As a matter of course, parents/carers should be contacted if their child has been found in possession of a weapon or if they have been asked to allow their property to be searched. In exceptional circumstances, it may not be appropriate to notify parents/carers e.g. if evidence of an offence is found which may also involve the parent/carer. We would be guided by the police in such circumstances.

Arrests on school premises:

Unless the circumstances make it unavoidable, it is preferable for police officers to avoid making arrests on school premises. If it proves necessary, it should be done with the co-operation of the school and as discreetly as possible.

NB: If an item that could be construed as a weapon is required for a particular lesson, then this must be with prior consultation and agreement with the subject teacher. The subject teacher should be given the item at the start of the day, ensure it is kept in a secure place and only returned at 3.10pm. If there are any concerns about the item, parents/carers should be asked to collect it.

THIS POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN, ANTI-BULLYING POLICY, SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND PUPIL BEHAVIOUR POLICY, CHILD PROTECTION POLICY, LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY, EQUALITY POLICY, E-SAFETY POLICY, EXCLUSION OF PUPILS POLICY AND THE SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY.

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Reviewed by D Christopher _____ January 2019 _____ (Date)

Adopted by Governors _____ (Sign) _____ (Date)

Review date _____ March 2020 _____