



ANGUS COUNCIL

Managing Incidents Involving Weapons

Policy and Procedures

Schools and Learning

August 2018

Review 2021

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1. Background to Policy

This policy has been created to give direction to schools and their communities on managing weapons in schools. It has been informed by careful consideration of the recommendations from the [independent review](#) of the circumstances surrounding the death of Bailey Gwynne at Cults Academy on 28 October 2015.

2. Legislation and Children's Rights

[Section 49A of the Criminal Law \(Consolidation\) \(Scotland\) Act 1995:](#)

'Any person who without lawful authority, or reasonable excuse, has with him/her on school premises, an offensive weapon or blade or point within the meaning of sections 47 and 49 of this Act, shall be guilty of an offence. This is subject to certain defences'.

o [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1992, UNICEF\):](#)

"Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them." Article 19

3. Links to Angus Council Schools and Learning Policies

- o [Angus Multi agency Child Protection Guidelines](#)
- o [Anti-bullying Policy](#)
- o [Better Relationships, Better Learning Better Behaviour](#)
- o [Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures](#)
- o [Getting it Right for Every Child](#)
- o [Guidance of the level of Intervention expected by staff](#)
- o [Preventing and Managing School Exclusions in Angus](#)

4. Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to:

- Safeguard the rights and wellbeing of children, young people and staff
- Provide operational and procedural guidance and reassurance to Angus Council staff
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of staff and partners

5. Responding to an Incident

The scenarios in which a weapon are encountered in school can range enormously from a teacher confiscating a knife to a child/young person threatening another child/young person.

In situations where there is a risk of a weapon related incident in school, the following procedures should be implemented (flowchart outlined in appendix one):

At time of incident

1. Emergency Services should be contacted immediately if anyone is injured
2. Where there is a significant risk, Police Scotland should be contacted immediately
3. Contact should be made with the Service Leader for your school, or in his/her absence, another Service Leader or the Head of Schools and Learning, in order to share assessed risk.

Things to consider when assessing risk

- Current risk assessments in place
 - Credibility of information
 - Knowledge about child/young person
 - Previous incidents involving weapons or similar behaviour(s)
4. Any surrendered or found weapons should be placed carefully in a secure location/locked drawer (please see child / young person searches below) or in the possession of member of staff if out with the school building. Decisions will be taken in conjunction with Police Scotland as to ongoing possession any weapon.

5. Parents/Carers or emergency contacts should be notified immediately

Points to consider when calling Police

You may be asked to share the following information:-

- **Name; date of birth.; relevant background information for the child/young person.**
- **Any known risks linked to the child/young person e.g. previous violence.**
- **Has the weapon been seen by staff or pupils? What is the weapon?**
- **Brief details of the incident or allegation.**
- **Where is the child/young person now and who with?**
- **Any other risk factors e.g. concerns around mental health; under the influence of drugs, alcohol, etc.**

Child/Young Person Searches

1. If it is suspected that a child/young person has a weapon his/her possession, the safety of the child/young person and all others within the school is of paramount importance.
2. If factors suggest that there is a risk to others, e.g. the child/young person has presented a weapon previously, **if it is safe to do so**, the child/young person should be removed from access to other children/young people, placed in a safe environment and Police Scotland called. It may be more appropriate to keep the child/young person where they are, remove others from the location and maintain a safe distance whilst monitoring the child/young person.
3. A member of school staff, in the presence of a member of senior staff, may ask the child or young person to disclose and display the contents of clothing or bags.
4. If the child or young person will not cooperate then they should be asked to remain where they are and Police should be called immediately. Staff should not directly challenge the child or young person or search bags/clothing themselves.

Information shared by others about Weapons / Knives in school

There may be occasions when information related to weapons becomes known within the school. This could arise from a discussion between a child/young person and a member of staff or by some other means.

The main points are as follows:

- This information must be treated as a priority and shared with senior managers immediately. Any delay could place people at risk.
- The disclosing child/young person should be advised that no guarantee of confidentiality can be given and that the information will be acted on.

After the incident:

1. Any decision to exclude a child/young person from school remains a matter for the Head Teacher and will be decided following discussion with the Service Leader. If exclusion takes place, the normal exclusion procedures apply.
2. If the Police wish to interview a child/young person, every effort should be made to contact the parent/carer prior to the interview. This can be carried out by Police, Social Work and/or Education as appropriate. Police officers have the power to interview children under 16 without parental permission or their presence. In such circumstances, contact should be made with parents/carers prior to the interview to ascertain who should be present with the child/young person. This may be a member of school staff. Where a child/young person does not wish an accompanying adult parents should be informed.
3. Any decision relating to informing the wider school community following an incident should be taken on a case by case basis and in agreement with the Service Leader.
4. The need for using the staged intervention process to meet the needs of the child/young person should be considered.
5. If the child/young person involved is receiving support from a Social Worker then they should also be contacted.
6. Head Teachers should avoid speaking to the press directly on matters related to incidents in schools. All media enquiries should be directed through Angus Council's Communications Team: communications@angus.gov.uk. The Communications Team should be fully briefed on details relating to exclusions, child/young persons involved, ages, background to incident, etc.

7. Staff should complete the appropriate incident form e.g. [Violence and Aggression](#); [Anti-Bullying](#) and [Accident Reporting](#).

6. Useful contacts

- Police Scotland 101 or 999 in an emergency
- Crimestoppers 0800 555 111
- Parentline 0800 282 223
- Childline 0800 1111
- The Ben Kinsella Trust: <http://www.benkinsella.org.uk/>
- RespectMe: <https://respectme.org.uk/>
- Mentors in Violence Prevention: <http://mvpscotland.org.uk/>
- Playing it Safe: <https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/news/september-2017/playing-it-safe-knife-crime-prevention-resource-for-primary-schools/>
- No Knives, Better Lives: <http://noknivesbetterlives.com/>

Appendix 1

