



Weapons In Schools

Introduction

Purposes of the presentation

- to provide guidance and support
- to raise knowledge around the powers and law when dealing with offensive weapons

West Midlands Police objectives regarding Weapons in Schools

- keeping pupils safe
- reducing the risk of young people getting drawn into crime or anti-social or extremist behaviour
- improving the safety of the school site and the wider community
- building positive relationships with pupils, staff and local neighbourhoods by promoting shared values



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Core Principles – Young People and Crime

Young people:

- Experiment with behaviour and test boundaries as they mature;
- Have less capacity, the younger they are, for restraining themselves, resisting temptation or resisting peer pressure;
- Mature at different rates and have less life experience than adults;
- Are more able to change their behaviour and attitudes than adults, and benefit from a greater opportunity to learn from their mistakes;
- Suffer a greater impact from social stigma or a criminal record, affecting future opportunities and prospects.

This increases the need to intervene at a low level, but means we must be careful, to take into account immaturity and ensure damage to futures is avoided.



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Core Principles – Police interventions

Police actions in relation to weapons in schools should:

- Confront young people with the consequences of offending;
- Help develop a sense of personal responsibility;
- Manage a clear risk to young people within the community;
- Reinforce the serious nature of weapon-related crime;
- Strengthen factors that reduce the risk of re-offending;
- Encourage reparation;
- Encourage the restoration of relationships of trust;
- Define, agree and reinforce the responsibilities of parents.

The principal aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending by children and young people. The interests of the young person, and the input of Youth Offending Teams will be considered, in ensuring a firm, fair and consistent approach.



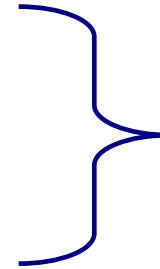
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Incident Reporting

Is an immediate police response required?

If there is a risk of:

1. A danger to life
2. Use or immediate threat of use, of violence
3. Serious injury to a person
4. Serious damage to property



**Dial 999
immediately**

If no immediate response is required, report the incident to your SLO or call 101 if the SLO cannot respond in the same school day.

Due to the serious nature and potential consequences of weapon possession, contact with police should be expedited.

SLOs will seek the view of the head teacher, and where possible will use 'community resolutions' to avoid criminalisation. Other options include cautions, voluntary interviews and arrests.

Schools should retain items in a safe place to be seized and destroyed by the police.



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Outcomes and Benefits for Schools

- Help in identifying, challenging and supporting pupils at risk of causing harm through the professional expertise of police officer and other partners.
- A calmer school environment where all members of the school community will feel safer and understand the potentially serious consequences of weapon possession.
- Greater opportunities to work with the police and partners, helping to support more effective interventions with pupils and families.
- Reputation for maintaining a safe school environment where weapon possession isn't tolerated.
- Providing help to prevent and deter and divert young people from further offending.
- Evidence of joint preventative action for any future serious case review, including how risk has been managed and young people safeguarded.



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Outcomes and Benefits for the Police

- Opportunities to work with partners to improve community safety by being able to identify and support children and young people who feel threatened by crime and anti-social behaviour through prevention and early intervention.
- Development of partnership working with local schools through shared understanding and cooperative working.
- Opportunities to develop relationships with young people and talk about local crime issues, including if there are problems around gang culture, group offending, weapon carrying or risks from violent extremism.
- Reductions in youth crime and anti-social behaviour, through identifying and dealing with issues at an early stage in school.



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Law and Definitions

Possession of a weapon is a criminal offence. The law provides police with specific powers to safeguard the public; the following definitions provide police with power to deal with incidents involving weapons.

Legal term	Definition	Statute reference
Offensive Weapon	<i>Any person, who without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, proof of which shall lie on him, has with him in any public place any offensive weapon, shall be guilty of an offence Any article <u>made or adapted</u> for use for causing injury to the person, or <u>intended</u> by the person having it with him for such use by him, or by some other person.</i>	Section 1 prevention of crime act 1953

The meaning of offensive weapon can be broken down into two categories:

- a) Those that are offensive per se, that is, those either made (e.g. knuckle-duster, dagger, gun) or adapted (e.g. broken bottle) for use for causing injury to the person; and*
- b) Weapons not so made or adapted (e.g. kitchen knife, spanner, hammer) but intended by the person having it with him for causing injury to the person.*



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Law and Definitions

Legal term

Going Equipped

Definition

Any person, when not at his place of abode has with him any article for use in the course of, or in connection with any burglary or theft

Statute reference

Section 25 theft act 1968 (as amended by fraud act 2006)

Carrying a Bladed or Sharply Pointed Article

Any person who has with him any article, which has a blade or is sharply pointed in a public place without good reason or lawful authority, commits an offence.

Section 139(1) criminal justice act 1988

Carrying a Bladed or Sharply Pointed Article on School Premises

Any person who has with him any article, which has a blade or is sharply pointed or any offensive weapon on school premises without good reason or lawful authority commits an offence.

Section 139A criminal justice act 1988



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Law and Definitions

Legal term

Power of Entry and Search: Carrying a Bladed or Sharply Pointed Article on School Premises

Definition

A constable may:

- *Enter and search school premises and persons on school premises for bladed articles, pointed articles, offensive weapons if reasonable grounds to believe offence or possession of such an article is or has been committed.*
- *Seize and retain anything found.*
- *Use force, if necessary.*



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