



Biddick Academy

<i>Name of Policy</i>	Weapons
<i>Aims of Policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To clearly set out the preventative actions in place to prevent the use of any weapons on the Academy site• To show the direct actions the Academy will take around the use of weapons on site taking into account the full context around each and every incident• We are committed to the safety and well-being of all of our students, staff and parents and will always take immediate action to reduce the risk of harm to any individual on our school site
<i>Date Valid</i>	July 2023 – July 2024
<i>Date of Approval</i>	June 2023 – Headteacher June 2023 Trustee Board
<i>Next Review and Approval Date</i>	June 2024
<i>Responsibility for Review</i>	Deputy Headteacher

Contents

PART 1: Introduction

- 1.1 'What is a weapon'

PART 2: Preventative Strategies

- 2.1. Recognition
- 2.2 Creating a safeguarding culture
- 2.3 Effective use of the curriculum
- 2.4 Working with parents
- 2.5 Working with partnership agencies (signposting services)

PART 3: Searching, Confiscation and Screening

PART 4: Taking Action

- 4.1. Taking action in the event of a weapon on site
- 4.2 Gathering the facts
- 4.3 Consider intent
- 4.4 Deciding on the next course of action
- 4.5 Returning to School / Safety Planning

PART 5: Review of circumstances

1.0 Introduction

All procedures in this policy pertain to the Equality Act 2010, in respect of safeguarding and in respect of students with SEND.

The Academy's ethos 'inspiring learning, unlocking potential, achieving success' is the reflection of an uncompromising belief that every child will be equally able to secure outstanding educational outcomes and reach their full potential in a positive learning community which supports and values their achievements.

At Biddick Academy we want everyone to:

- Be part of a safe and respectful community
- Feel happy, valued, and empowered so that we all thrive
- Aspire to be the best we can be
- Act with integrity
- Nurture resilience and independence
- Have the attitude and character to excel in life
- Have a desire to learn and work with passion, purpose, and pride
- Adhere to The Biddick Way

We will celebrate hard work, excellent punctuality, and polite, respectful behaviour. Through all staff acting as role models and supporting all students in meeting the high expectations we have for them; we will promote a flourishing and positive learning community.

Consistency in the application of our Weapons Policy is the collective responsibility of all members of staff, teachers, and support staff. Full and active support by all staff is vital so that all members of the school community can work and live together in a positive learning environment.

The purpose of this policy is to state clearly that the **deliberate** and **intentional** bringing in and use of weapons on our school site will not be tolerated. The use of such weapons on site would create unacceptable risks of bullying, injury and death and is extremely intimidating and frightening for students and adults alike.

If a student deliberately and intentionally brings a weapon onto the school site, the student will be suspended and a disciplinary hearing will be carried out and a permanent exclusion will be considered.

1.1 What is a weapon

For the purpose of this Policy a "weapon" is:

- a firearm of any description, including starting pistols, air guns and any type of replica or toy gun, pellet guns or BB guns
- knives, including all variations of bladed objects i.e.: pocket knives, craft knives, scissors etc.
- explosives, including fireworks, aerosol sprays, lighters, matches
- laser pens or other objects, even if manufactured for a non-violent purpose but has a potentially violent use i.e.: the purpose of keeping or carrying the object is for use, or threat of use, as a weapon.
- Num chukkas, death stars and other martial arts objects.
- Screwdrivers, hammers, chisels, bradles and any tool that could be offensively used.
- Razor, razor blades or chains.

2.0 Preventative Strategies

2.1 Recognition

For all schools and settings, it is important to develop appropriate strategies in order to prevent the issue of weapon misuse or any contextual issues around the misuse of weapons such as children having them to 'feel safe' from peers or gangs.

Firstly, and most importantly for schools and settings is recognition that incidents where children bring weapons onto site may happen intentionally as well as unintentionally even with the most stringent of policies. In these cases, the immediate actions taken by staff must be prompt and consistent and therefore ALL staff must know and understand this policy and the expectations of keeping children safe. In any circumstance where this occurs it is important that senior leaders take forward any learning from such incidents to improve policy, revise training and improve practice.

2.2 Creating a safeguarding culture

In order for students and staff to feel safe it is necessary that everyone agrees to and works within the school's ethos and culture of vigilance and positively contributes to the sharing of information where there may be risk. By creating a strong culture of safeguarding within school all individuals accessing the site should feel safe to raise concerns, seek support and for a seamless and consistent response to incidents to be followed. In order to create this environment, the whole workforce and students should receive appropriate learning and training around the expectations upon them in the event that a weapon may be brought onto site. This includes, how to raise the alarm, procedures for lockdown, use of social media and critical incident response. Staff and students should feel able to contribute to this learning/training to understand what to do in a number of potentially different circumstances.

2.3 Effective use of the curriculum

Having an effective curriculum in place via the Personal Development curriculum should support students in understanding the risks around the use of weapons, the legal implications of carrying weapons and the school's response to such incidents. A curriculum that allows strong discussion around the use of weapons may act preventatively to allow students to think twice about the consequences of carrying a weapon and equally may create opportunities for students to share useful intelligence around peer-on-peer abuse, gang related behaviours and contextual issues in the local area that may impact on the increased use of weapons. Any such intelligence shared would need to be passed on to the appropriate front door services, police, and social care.

2.4 Working with parents

Parents need to be aware of the school's stringent policy around weapons and support the decision made by senior leaders in the event of an incident. Parents should always be vigilant of the behaviours of their own children and seek support and intervention when necessary. If parents believe that their child may be carrying a weapon, they should inform the **school immediately** and the **police** in order to protect not only their child but other children and adults. By sharing the information immediate intervention can be offered and a plan of support and services could be put in place without an incident occurring. By continuing good communication between home and school a positive safety plan could be created to manage the safety and the well-being of any child who may need it.

2.5 Working with partnership agencies/signposting services

Multi agency working can consolidate in house procedures in schools/settings. By accessing advice, support and guidance when required, effective decisions can be made in collaboration to improve outcomes for children who may be at risk of harm. Seeking advice and guidance can act as a preventative measure so that the right course of action is taken at the earliest opportunity. If schools continue to promote positive working relationships with front door services such as the police and social care, effective responses and partnership working can achieve positive outcomes for children.

It is important that signposting is also available to students in the event that they don't feel confident raising an issue to staff or a peer. It is useful to have a resource board with support services on a wide range of issues so young people can seek their own solutions should they wish to. In the same way external services or support programmes could be brought in to talk to young people about specific issues in support of the prevention of child on child abuse.

3.0 Searching, Confiscation and Screening

The Academy follows the DfE guidelines (2018) and Education and Inspections Act (2006) on screening, searching and confiscation, however we do not currently screen students. Students can be searched on Biddick Academy premises, or, if elsewhere, where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the students e.g. visits.

Without Consent Search

It is a criminal offence to have a knife or offensive weapon on school premises (it is a defence to be carrying one for educational or other lawful purpose). If a student is suspected of carrying a weapon, the Academy has the authority to do a "without consent search". The Academy has decided to carry out searches with consent only and if a student does not consent to a search, then the Academy will opt for one of the following:

- Request parent/carer attend the Academy and search the student or
- Call the police to carry out the search

With Consent Search

The Academy has the authority to carry out a search for weapons, items which have been stolen or which may be used to carry out an offence (this includes cigarettes, lighters and e-cigarettes). Where a student consents to a search the following protocol will be observed:

- Two members of staff will be present
 - The student will be questioned first
 - If questioning confirms suspicion, the student will be asked to surrender the item
 - If suspicion remains then the student will be asked to remove outer clothing and to empty bags, pockets etc.
- At no point will an intimate search or 'patting down' take place
- Searches will take place in privacy where possible and will be sensitive to race, culture, religion etc.

School staff can search Students with their consent for any item.

- Schools are not required to have formal written consent from the student for this sort of search – it is enough for the teacher to ask the student to turn out his or her pockets or if the teacher can look in the student's bag or locker and for the student to agree.

- Banned items are listed in the table below
- If a member of staff suspects a student has a banned item in his/her possession, they can instruct the student to turn out his or her pockets or bag and if the student refuses, the teacher can apply an appropriate

consequence

- A student refusing to co-operate with such a search raises the same kind of issues as where a student refuses to stay in a detention or refuses to stop any other unacceptable behaviour when instructed by a member of staff – in such circumstances, an appropriate consequence will be applied.

The law protects members of staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss of, or damage to, any item they have confiscated, provided they have acted lawfully, are in line with the guidelines above and have dealt with the confiscated items in line with the procedures set out below. Biddick Academy consequences will be applied as appropriate.

Items banned within Biddick Academy Rules	Prohibited / Illegal Items	Confiscation Procedure
Mobile phones / headphones / earphones		<p>Handed into Student Office – Student can collect at 3pm unless HOY arranges otherwise.</p> <p>Persistent breaches will result in the parent being required to collect the phone / headphones / earphones.</p>
Chewing Gum		Disposed.
	Knives / Weapons	<p>Parents informed.</p> <p>Police involvement.</p>
	Alcohol	<p>Disposed and destroyed.</p> <p>Parents informed.</p>
	<p>Controlled Drugs</p> <p>Substances believed to be</p>	<p>Parents informed.</p> <p>Police involvement.</p>

4.0 Taking action

4.1 Taking action in the event of a weapon on site

If it has been identified that a weapon is on site and the appropriate searching and confiscating has occurred, then the school must begin a full and thorough investigation into what has occurred. If it can be proven that a weapon was brought on site with intent to harm, then immediate action should occur including contacting the police and parents immediately. The student should be isolated immediately.

If the weapon has been identified because it has been used to harm e.g., another student or member of staff, the school should instigate its critical incident management protocols immediately inclusive of lock down procedures, secure and isolate the student and weapon if possible and again contact the police immediately.

If the context of the situation is not so easily identified, then a full and thorough investigation is required to establish the school's next course of action.

4.2 Gathering the facts

In all circumstances, staff need to speak to all the students involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use **consistent language** and **open questions** for each account. The easiest way to do this is not to have a line of questioning but to ask the students to tell you what happened. Only interrupt the student from this to gain clarity with open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?) A full and clear record of exactly what the student has said in their own language should be made (and no individual interpretation of the facts made which could impact on the disclosure) and stored following each school/setting's own recording protocols (paper or electronic systems).

4.3 Consider intent

From the information gathered the next step would be to consider intent. Did the student intend to bring a weapon onto the school site in order to harm someone in a deliberate act or did the young person bring the weapon on site as a form of defence or for their own safety? Both situations are of equal concern, however one shows a deliberate attempt of harm and both circumstances may have different outcomes.

4.4 Deciding on the next course of action

From the outcome of the investigation the school must decide on the level of risk the student poses in school. If the risk is clear and the intent is obvious then a suspension and a disciplinary hearing may follow or the decision to permanently exclude may be made following the necessary protocols. However, depending on the intent, the age of the child and also the circumstances surrounding the incident or the contextual issues it may be a suspension is given followed by a risk assessment/safety plan put in place following the student's return to school.

4.5 Returning to school/safety planning

Safety planning is a positive way of supporting a child who may benefit from a planned approach to support or intervention following an incident where a weapon has been brought to school. Safety plans support the child by considering the behaviour behind the use of a weapon and plan ways to manage any identified risks/triggers and seek support from adults and peers. They are inclusive of parents and staff and are a planned intervention to support young people in feeling secure in the school/setting, helping young people identify behaviours that may leave them feeling anxious or at risk and have strategies that they can apply to keep themselves feeling safe. The language of safety planning is more positive than risk assessment and can give security to the child that a joined-up approach is being followed by all in school.

5.0 Review of Circumstances

Following any incident of harm, it is necessary for the school/setting to consider if anything could have been done differently.

This policy /practice guidance should be read in conjunction with:

DFE: Keeping Children Safe in Education. Child
Protection Policy
Peer on Peer Abuse Policy
Behaviour and Discipline Policy