



Offensive Weapons Policy

Policy Type:	Trust Core Policy
Approved By:	St Benet's Board of Trustees (Finance, Audit and Resources Committee)
Approval Date:	07/02/2022
Date Adopted by LGB:	dd/mm/yyyy
Review Date:	February 2025
Person Responsible:	Head of Operations

Summary of Changes

The model policy has been revised to reflect these changes to the statutory guidance as outlined below.

Page Ref.	Section	Amendment	Date of Change
All	All	Whole policy reviewed and updated for suitability across the Harleston Federation	Sep 21
All	All	Whole policy reviewed and updated for suitability across the Trust	Jan 2022

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The St Benet's Multi Academy Trust is accountable for all policies across its Academies. All policies, whether relating to an individual academy or the whole Trust, will be written and implemented in line with our ethos and values as articulated in our prospectus. We are committed to the provision of high quality education in the context of the Christian values of service, thankfulness and humility where individuals are valued, aspirations are high, hope is nurtured and talents released.

A Scheme of Delegation for each academy sets out the responsibilities of the Local Governing Body and Headteacher / Head of School. The Headteacher / Head of School of each academy is responsible for the implementation of all policies of the Academy Trust.

All employees of the Academy Trust are subject to the Trust's policies.

Statement of intent

St Benet's MAT recognises the increasing number of school-aged children who are found carrying offensive weapons and acknowledges our duty to ensure that pupils are safe and that they understand the repercussions of carrying weapons.

Through this policy, we aim to:

- Outline the weapons that are legally considered offensive, and the weapons that the academy has placed a strict ban on.
- Establish clear and accurate reporting procedures that can be easily followed by pupils and staff.
- Outline a procedure for investigating any reports, which will be followed accurately and consistently.
- Provide staff with unambiguous management guidelines to follow if a pupil is found to be carrying a weapon.
- Establish how the academy will support and reintegrate pupils following an incident, wherever possible.
- Outline the academy's methods for ensuring pupils are kept safe from harm.

Signed by:

Headteacher Date:

Chair of governors Date:

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Prevention of Crime Act 1953
- Offensive Weapons Act 1996
- Offensive Weapons Act 2019
- Criminal Justice Act 1988
- European Convention of Human Rights 1953
- Education Act 1996
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012
- Crossbows Acts 1987
- Firearms Act 1968

1.2. This policy has due regard to all relevant 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'

1.3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following academy policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

2. Definitions

2.1. 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 (including any legal knife).
- 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.

2.2. 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.

2.3. 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. a piece of wood with nails in it (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).

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

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. The local governing board is responsible for:

- Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and conducting reviews following any offensive weapon incidents.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring appropriate training has been arranged for staff regarding managing offensive weapon incidents in schools.

3.2. The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy and ensuring that all pupils 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

3.3. The DSL is responsible for:

- Monitoring the anonymous offensive weapons reporting and processing any reports that are made.
- Investigating any reports of offensive weapons in liaison with the Headteacher/Head of School.
- Sharing information via assemblies, tutor time programme and bulletins to remind pupils and staff how to file anonymous offensive weapons reports.

3.4. 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 school.
- Making offensive weapons reports via the online reporting system (CURA), if they have any suspicions about any member of the academy community.

3.5. Pupils are responsible for:

- Adhering to the provisions of this policy in terms of not having prohibited items on their person.
- Reporting to a member of staff if they are aware or concerned about someone carrying a weapon

3.6. Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring their children understand the repercussions of carrying an offensive item in a public place, including a academy.
- 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.

4. Offensive weapons list

4.1. The following items are banned by law, regardless of their intended use:

- Flick knives
- Butterfly knives
- Disguised knives
- Belt buckle knives
- Push daggers
- Gravity knives

- 'Airport' or stealth knives
- Sword-sticks
- Samurai swords
- Knuckle-dusters
- Hand-claws
- Foot-claws
- Blowpipes or guns
- Hollow kubotan
- Shuriken
- Telescopic truncheons
- Kusari-gama
- Kyoketsu shoge
- Kusari
- 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
- Bump stocks.

4.2. As outlined in the Crossbows Act 1987, crossbows are prohibited under the age of 18.

4.3. Firearms are also considered prohibited items. Firearms include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Starting pistols
- Air guns
- Any type of replica or toy gun

4.4. The police will be contacted immediately if any pupil is found to be in possession of any of the above items. The academy will support the police in any investigations as far as possible, e.g. providing information. The police's decision regarding the pupil will be final.

4.5. The maximum penalty for carrying an offensive weapon is four years imprisonment, a fine or both.

4.6. The maximum penalty for possessing a corrosive substance in a public place without a valid reason is four years imprisonment, a fine or both.

4.7. In addition to the above, the academy also considers the following items to be prohibited:

- Fireworks
- Laser pens
- Paintball guns
- Tasers
- Lighters and matches
- Drugs and related items
- Imitation firearms
- Pornographic images
- Stolen items
- Knives and guns
- Firearms ammunitions
- Alcohol
- Tobacco and related items

4.8. Any pupil found to be in possession of an item listed in paragraph 4.7 may be immediately excluded from the academy, in accordance with the academy's Exclusion Policy.

4.9. The Academy will regularly use tutor time and assemblies to remind pupils about what will happen if they are suspected to be carrying an offensive weapon, and the serious repercussions that pupils could face for carrying any of the items mentioned above.

5. Reporting procedure

5.1. The academy will implement and monitor an anonymous reporting procedure that is available to pupils, staff and the wider community.

5.2. The anonymous email reporting procedure is available here: [office email address](#)

5.3. The DSL and their deputies will monitor any reports made via the anonymous email procedure.

5.4. The lead DSL will use staff briefings, meetings, tutor time and assemblies to remind pupils and staff how they can make anonymous reports.

5.5. Upon receiving a report, the DSL and Headteacher/Head of School will be responsible for informing the chair of governors and investigating the report.

5.6. 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 premises until the police investigation has been completed.
- Social services may be informed of the investigation.

5.7. If a report is made regarding a staff member, the DSL, Headteacher or Head of School 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.

5.8. If a member of the public is on the academy site with a weapon, the academy's lockdown and emergency procedures will be followed.

6. Investigation procedure

6.1. When a report of a pupil who may be carrying an offensive weapon is made, a member of SLT and DSL will promptly risk assess the situation, determining:

- Where the pupil can be located.
- What risks their surroundings are likely to pose, e.g. a confined space such as the changing rooms resulting in close proximity to other pupils.
- Where the pupil is likely to be carrying the offensive weapon, e.g. on their person or in their bag.

6.2. Once the pupil has been located and the member of SLT and DSL have risk assessed the situation, two members of trained staff will be asked to escort the pupil to a safe location.

6.3. At this point the concern will be discussed with the pupil in a calm non-confrontational manner. This can be led by the member of SLT or DSL.

6.4. The pupil will be asked to empty their bag and they will search their outer clothing, in line with the Academies searching protocols.

6.5. The parents/carers of the pupil will be informed of the search and the reasons behind it (where appropriate, e.g. maintaining confidentiality by not informing parents who raised the concern).

7. Management of pupils

- 7.1. If no weapon has been found after the pupil's bag and outer clothing has been searched, in some cases the police could be called to carry out a full search.
- 7.2. If still no weapon has been found, the pupil will be thanked for their co-operation and sent back to class
- 7.3. If a weapon is found then the DSL or member of SLT will refer the matter to the Principal
- 7.4. The Principal will use their professional judgement and seek professional advice to make a decision on the outcomes of the incident.
- 7.5. The Academy will keep a record of all searches that have been conducted, which will be stored and logged on the online safeguarding system and kept in line with the Data Protection policy.
- 7.6. The academy understands the negative effect that exclusion can have on pupils and will do everything within its power to support, protect and help pupils; however, will follow the procedures within the Exclusion Policy where necessary.
- 7.7. If a weapon of any description is produced and used to threaten, physically or mentally, or harm another person, the Academy will call the police immediately.
- 7.8. While waiting for the police to arrive, staff will understand and adhere to the following procedure:
- The emergency/lockdown procedures will be invoked.
 - Staff will ensure their own and pupils' safety.
 - Staff will do all they can to contain the pupil, e.g. in a classroom; however, staff will not risk their own safety.
 - Staff will try to calm the pupil down.
 - Staff will ensure they keep a safe distance between themselves and the pupil and they will try to keep items in between themselves and the pupil, e.g. desks.
 - Staff will never put themselves at risk.
- 7.9. If a pupil has produced a weapon, staff will wait for the police to arrive.
- 7.10. 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 decision, e.g. regarding punishments.
- 7.11. Following any incident where a weapon has been produced, this policy will be reviewed by the DSL and Principal.

8. Reintegration

- 8.1. While the academy never condones carrying a weapon, we understand that there are many reasons as to why a pupil may feel the need to carry a weapon, e.g. they are being bullied.
- 8.2. If a pupil who has been found to be in possession of a weapon remains at the academy, the DSL will be responsible for supporting and monitoring the pupil.
- 8.3. The DSL will establish the pupil's reasons for carrying a weapon and will put appropriate support systems in place.

8.4. The DSL will hold weekly meetings with the pupil to monitor their safety and wellbeing until the DSL is satisfied with the pupil's wellbeing.

8.5. Carrying a weapon can be an indicator of a safeguarding concern, e.g. county lines exploitation or neglect, and the DSL will investigate any concerns and make a referral to the appropriate body, e.g. the police, if appropriate.

8.6. Other pupils will not be informed that the pupil was suspected of carrying a weapon.

8.7. The pupil's parents will, if appropriate, be involved in the reintegration plan, e.g. attending the weekly meetings with the DSL.

8.8. The academy will offer counselling services to the pupil, if appropriate.

8.9. The DSL will ensure that the academy complies with any provisions outlined in a pupil's knife crime prevention order, e.g. prohibiting the pupil from using the internet.

8.10. Knife crime prevention orders can require a person to:

- Be at a particular place between particular times on particular days.
- Be at a particular place between particular times on any day.
- Present themselves to a particular person at a place where they are required to be between particular times on particular days.
- Participate in particular activities between particular times on particular days.

8.11. In particular, knife crime prevention orders can prohibit a person from:

- Being in a particular place.
- Being with certain people.
- Participating in specified activities.
- Using particular articles or having particular articles with them.
- Using the internet to facilitate or encourage crime involving bladed articles.

9. Safeguarding

9.1. In line with 'Keeping children safe in education 2020', the academy has a duty to protect pupils from harm.

9.2. The academy will conduct regular surveys to establish whether pupils feel safe, how pupils could be made to feel safer and to ensure pupils understand the academy's reporting procedures.

9.3. The academy will use SKL, assemblies and tutor time and workshops in which pupils will learn about what it means legally to carry or threaten someone with a weapon.

9.4. The academy will invite local law enforcement officers into the academy to give assemblies on the dangers of carrying an offensive weapon.

9.5. The academy may consider using hand-held metal detector wands to identify pupils who are carrying weapons.

9.6. All pupils and parents will be made aware of the academy's reporting procedures and the academy's commitment to protecting the academy community – parents will receive a letter annually.

9.7. The academy implements a Health and safety policy, which outlines the safety precautions that the academy will take to keep pupils and the academy community safe from harm.

- 9.8. The academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be adhered to by all staff, parents and pupils.
- 9.9. The academy will ensure raising awareness on the dangers of offensive weapons is part of the SKL curriculum.
- 9.10. Pupils will have read and understood the academy's Positive Behaviour Culture Policy.
- 9.11. All staff participate, where appropriate, in annual offensive weapons training, including de-escalation techniques, lockdown and evacuation procedures.
- 9.12. The academy understands that certain pupils are likely to be more at risk than others in terms of carrying a knife.
- 9.13. Staff will be aware that the following characteristics may make a pupil more susceptible to carrying an offensive weapon:
- Disadvantaged backgrounds
 - Pupils with SEND, e.g. they are more susceptible to county lines or gang exploitation
 - Pupils from difficult family situations
 - Severely bullied pupils
- 9.14. If any member of the public, a parent or a staff member produces a weapon on the academy premises, the academy's lockdown and evacuation procedures will be followed.

10. Monitoring and review

- 10.1. The Trust will review this policy every three years.
- 10.2. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2023.
- 10.3. Any changes made to this policy will be immediately communicated to all employees, pupils and parents.

Appendix 1

Letter to Parents Regarding Managing Offensive Weapon Incidents

Address line one
Address line two
City/town
Postcode

Date

RE: The academy's management of offensive weapons

Dear name of parent,

As I am sure you are aware, there have been a lot of recent news stories regarding young people carrying offensive weapons such as knives. I would like to reassure you that your child is safe at academy by explaining how the academy aims to manage any incidents of offensive weapons and keep your children safe.

The academy operates an anonymous email reporting procedure that can be found on the academy's website. All pupils, staff, parents and the wider community are invited to use this reporting procedure if they have any concerns over safeguarding issues, including fears that a pupil may be carrying a weapon.

Upon receiving this report, the academy conducts a thorough investigation procedure.

The academy understands the negative effect that exclusions can have on pupils and will do everything within its power to support, protect and help pupils; however, we will follow the procedures within the Exclusion Policy where necessary.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please ask the academy office for a copy of our Offensive Weapons Policy which explains our procedures in full.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me on contact details

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Date