

Education Procedure Manual 2/35

WEAPONS AND KNIFE CRIME POLICY FOR EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

**For
Teachers and Employees on Scottish Negotiating Committee
for Teachers (SNCT) Conditions of Service**

Effective from: April 2026

Education, People & Business



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Version Control History

Version No.	Effective Date	Details of change from previous version	Date Approved	New version no.
-	Feb 2017	Transfer to new template Title updated Terminology updated Forms removed from appendices as stand-alone documents Procedure reviewed		

GDPR Statement

East Dunbartonshire Council holds, uses and processes information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and all other relevant national data protection laws. Further information detailing how East Dunbartonshire holds and uses personal information and copies of privacy notices used throughout the Council are available on our [website](#).

Policy Review Statement

This policy will be reviewed in line with:

- Legislative Change
- Changes to SNCT National Conditions of Service
- Other external factors
- Feedback on the effectiveness of the policy
- Requests for review by Elected Members, Trade Unions and/or Management

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy aims to safeguard children, adults, and the wider school community from the risks associated with the use of weapons and knife crime. It establishes clear expectations, preventative measures, and procedures for responding to incidents in all educational establishments in East Dunbartonshire.
- 1.2 This policy will support staff to:
- Ensure a shared understanding of anti-weapon and knife crime for staff, children and young people, and their families.
 - Provide procedural and operational guidance to all establishments in relation to dealing with incidents involving weapons/knife crime.
 - Provide clear systems for recording, reporting and monitoring all weapon related incidents and knife crime

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This document applies to all staff within all EDC Educational Establishments.
- 2.2 This document must be accessible to all staff, pupils, and parents and form part of staff training and induction.

3.0 References & Related Documentation

3.1 Legal Framework

3.1.1 This policy is informed by:

- The Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995 “*Any person who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, as with him/her in a public place, any offensive weapon, commits an offence*”
- The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
- Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) 2017 www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) (Incorporation)(Scotland) Act 2024
- Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2 2023 [Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions](#)
- Trauma Informed Practice Toolkit [Trauma-informed practice: toolkit - gov.scot](#)

3.1.2 Police Scotland

Police covering the locality of East Dunbartonshire, GJ Division Police Scotland, have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with East Dunbartonshire Council in relation to weapons in schools ([Appendix 1](#)). This agreement is reflected within this document.

3.2 Children’s Rights

- 3.2.1 In line with the [UNCRC](#), education authorities and schools have a duty to protect

children and young people's rights to safety (Article 19), life and development (Article 6), and education (Article 28). This means creating learning environments that are free from violence, weapons and the threat of knife crime and violence, and from someone committing a criminal offence against you (Article 37).

- 3.2.2 Schools must not only respond to risks but also take proactive steps to prevent harm, through education that promotes respect, non-violence and positive choices (Article 29).
- 3.2.3 Children and young people should be listened to (Article 12), supported to share their concerns about safety, and involved in shaping strategies to reduce the presence and use of weapons.
- 3.2.4 By embedding rights-based approaches, schools play a critical role in safeguarding learners and tackling the wider social issues linked to knife crime.
- 3.3 Documentation

The following documents should be referenced when considering this procedure:

- [SNCT Handbook](#)
- [Equalities Act 2010](#)
- Health & Safety forms HS1A and HS1B/Near Miss
- PM 3/50 Chronology of Significant Events (COSE) Chronology Guidance
- PM 2/35/F01: Notification of Weapons in Schools Form
- PM 2/35/F02: Pupil Management Plan and Risk Assessment Form

4.0 Policy Statement

East Dunbartonshire Council is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment. The possession or use of weapons, including knives, in school or during school-related activities is strictly prohibited. Any such incidents will be treated seriously and managed in line with Scottish Government guidance, local child protection procedures, and the law.

All significant incidents concerning weapons and knife crime will be reported to Police Scotland.

5.0 Definitions

- **Weapon:** Any object used with intent to threaten, harm or cause fear. Includes firearms, knives, or any adapted or improvised weapon.
- **Knife:** Any bladed or pointed item, including pocket-knives, regardless of blade length.
- **Possession:** Having a weapon on one's person, in belongings, or within school property (e.g. lockers or bags).

It may also be the case that a weapon is being kept out with school premises. This would also need to be reported to Police immediately who would investigate.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1 Headteachers and senior leaders must ensure this policy is communicated to children/young people, parents/carers, and staff, and is reviewed annually.
- 6.2 Staff must have a shared understanding of the policy and report any concerns or incidents immediately to the Headteacher, senior leader or Child Protection Co-ordinator.
- 6.3 Children are expected to uphold school rules and report any knowledge of weapons on school premises.
- 6.4 Parents/carers will be engaged where concerns arise and expected to support school actions.
- 6.5 School handbooks/communication should be updated to reflect relevant policies.

7.0 Procedure

7.1 Prevention and Education

All schools must provide education on the dangers and legal consequences of weapons and knife crime through PSE, health & wellbeing, and citizenship curriculum.

Schools will work in partnership with Police Scotland, youth services, and community organisations to deliver targeted interventions.

Supportive, trauma-informed approaches will be embedded in school culture, ensuring all children feel safe and respected.

7.2 Managing Incidents

This procedure is also outlined in a flowchart in [Appendix 3](#).

If a member of staff has been alerted to, or suspects that, a child/young person has a knife/weapon they should not ordinarily challenge the pupil unless circumstances suggest a challenge is a safe and reasonable option (such as no other pupils nearby, another staff member present, a robust relationship with the child).

The head teacher and/or child protection officer must be informed immediately (or senior leader in their absence).

Extreme care must be given to the safety of the child, and all others within the immediate area and within the establishment.

If an emergency, (e.g. child wielding/waving a weapon) staff should immediately contact the Police.

Any incident whereby a child/young person or adult has been harmed with a weapon must be dealt with by Police Scotland, and medical attention sought as necessary.

When dealing with a situation two members of staff, one of whom should be from the senior management team (SMT) (if practical), should ascertain the potential risk and decide on the most appropriate course of action:

- (1) Ask the child or young person to accompany them to a quiet area but only in the event this does not place the child, the member of staff or anyone else within the establishment in danger.
- (2) Evacuate any other persons in the immediate vicinity if there is any perceived or imminent threat.

It may be that the child discloses where the weapon is. If there is no risk to harm (e.g. in a bag, the SMT member/staff can retrieve the bag, with the weapon safely inside. The weapon should not be touched directly. This could bring additional risk to an already volatile situation and possibly interfere if a crime has been previously committed using the weapon.

Staff should not ask the child to retrieve/hand over the weapon. However, in the event of a live incident, staff can persuade child to put weapon down to secure it.

Two members of staff must always remain with the child or young person.

If a child or young person attempts to leave the room or area where they are, staff should not compromise their safety or that of others.

Alert parents/carers to inform them of situation/incident.

Alert social work to inform them of the situation/incident.

7.3 Carrying Out Searches

Under no circumstances should staff search a child or young person. Staff do not have the authority or training to carry out searches.

Under no circumstances should staff ask a child or young person to empty their bag or pockets to hand over a weapon.

Staff must contact Police Scotland who have the power to search. Staff should contact parents/carers after contacting the Police.

7.4 Consequences and Support

Each incident will be assessed on an individual basis considering the child's age, developmental stage, intent, and any vulnerabilities or additional support need.

However, all incidents that include weapons or knives should be reported to Police Scotland which may lead to:

- Criminal charges
- Temporary or permanent exclusion

In all cases, the following will be put in place, where appropriate:

- A risk assessment and plan
- A request for assistance to social work
- A request for assistance to SCRA
- Restorative and supportive interventions
- Parent/carer involvement to support

7.5 Planning

Depending upon how serious the incident was will determine whether a child/young person requires a risk assessment.

In line with “Including Every Learner” policy, a Team around the Child meeting will be held to establish the most appropriate planning and support.

7.6 Recording and Monitoring

All incidents involving weapons must be recorded in the SEEMiS/Chronology as a significant event (PM 3/50 Chronology of Significant Events (COSE) Chronology Guidance).

An HS1A form should be completed if appropriate and recorded appropriately with Health and Safety (use HS1B/Near Miss form if more appropriate)

A Notification of Weapons form (PM 2/35/F01) should be completed and shared with Education Officer and Child Protection Lead.

If in an Early Years setting, this information should be reported to the Care Inspectorate in line with notification processes.

All incidents should be reviewed as part of annual safeguarding audits.

7.7 Wellbeing Support

7.7.1 Adults

Incidents where staff have been required to intervene with challenging and distressing behaviours is likely to have an emotional impact on the staff involved. Following such an incident the head teacher/child protection officer should debrief with the member(s) of staff involved. The conversation should involve checking the wellbeing of the member of staff, talking through the incident using a ‘no blame’ approach, and ensuring the incident has been accurately recorded.

The affected member(s) of staff should be informed of support available to them through East Dunbartonshire Occupational Health support.

7.7.2 Children and Young People

Following any incident, and as soon as is reasonable and practical, a member of staff who has a strong and trusted relationship with the child or young person should debrief with them. This may take place along with a parent/carer or other agency involved with the child or young person. The discussion should involve checking the wellbeing of the child and talking through the incident using a solution focused approach.

Ongoing support and planning should be provided and carefully monitored to minimise any similar incidents.

The school's educational psychologist can provide additional support to both staff and child if required, along with the Police School Engagement Officer/Campus Cop.

Appendix 1: Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) relates to the recovery of knives or sharply bladed/pointed articles, or offensive weapons from within school premises.

The purpose of this MOU is to provide all staff members within any educational facility in the East Dunbartonshire area with guidance regarding the recovery of knives or weapons found within school grounds.

This report should take into consideration the 21 recommendations from the independent review of the circumstances that led to the death of Bailey Gwynne, as reported by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). *(It is understood that there are some recommendations in that report which are specific only to Aberdeen City Council).*

The protection of all children within any educational facility, and indeed out with school grounds, is recognised by Police Scotland and East Dunbartonshire Council as being of paramount importance. The tragic event which took place at Cults Academy on the 25th of October 2015 has highlighted the need for clear and concise guidelines relating to the recovery of knives and weapons within school grounds and should be made available to all teachers and staff.

Guidelines

1. If teachers or staff are in receipt of information which indicates or suggests that a pupil is in possession within school grounds of a knife, sharply bladed weapon, or other weapon, then Police Scotland should be contacted at the earliest opportunity.
2. Police Scotland officers should attend and deal with the incident at the level of resolution deemed appropriate. This is aimed at ensuring the safety of both the named child, other children present within the school, and all teachers and staff.
3. Teachers and staff may believe that they can defuse a violent situation or engage with a child whom they have a strong relationship with and persuade them to disarm themselves, and in most cases, experience has shown that this is the case. However, the purpose of this guidance is to mitigate occasions where such a situation deteriorates quickly, placing both the child and teacher or staff at risk. It is our recommendation that in such instances Police Scotland are notified immediately. Teachers and staff have no personal protective equipment, no training, and no statute powers available to them to deal with such situations. (Please see statutory information at the end of this section relating to powers of search and definition of weapon).
4. Police Scotland officers should take cognisance of all information presented to them by the school involved and should ensure as a matter of course that full details of the incident are accurately recorded and shared with partner agencies who are involved in all child protection matters.
5. If a child is found in possession of a knife or weapon within school grounds, then the following actions may be undertaken after police involvement.
 - Crime report raised, and child charged with offence labelled (if deemed criminal)

- Vulnerable Persons Database form submitted
 - Intelligence report submitted
 - Contact with the child's family is key and they would be involved at the earliest opportunity
 - The information may be shared with all partner agencies involved in child protection including Social Work, The Children's Reporter, and the Family GP.
 - Care plan requirements should be discussed and put in place if necessary, relating to the child, their home, and the school itself.
6. When the safety of the child, teachers and staff has been ensured the school can return to normality. Plans can put in place to reinforce the educational message about the dangers of carrying knives and weapons e.g. No Knives, Better Lives input, police officers providing support to teachers with classroom inputs etc.

Section 49A of the Criminal Law Consolidation (Scotland) Act 1995 states that it is an offence for any person to have an article with a blade or point (or offensive weapon) on school premises. There is a statutory defence for any person charged with this offence to show that they had a reasonable excuse or lawful authority for having the article or weapon with him/her on the premises in question (such as work purposes, educational purposes, religious reasons, or part of any national costume).

Section 49B of the Criminal Law Consolidation (Scotland) Act 1995 states that a constable may enter school premises and search those premises, and any person on those premises, for any article to which section 49 of this Act applies (a knife), or any offensive weapon within the meaning of section 47 of this Act, if he has reasonable grounds for suspecting that an offence under section 49A of this Act is being, or has been committed.

An offensive weapon is any article made or adapted for the use of causing injury to a person, or intended by the person having the article, for use for causing injury to a person by -

1. The person having it or
2. Another person

Appendix 2: Important Contact Details

Telephone Numbers

Police Scotland:

Emergency	999
Non-Emergency	101
Advice and Response	0141 355 2200

Each secondary school has a link liaison police officer. They should be contacted to help support individual planning.

Appendix 3: Flowchart - Dealing with an Incident

