

FALKIRK COUNCIL: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

WEAPONS POSSESSION PROTOCOL

16 MAY 2017

A BACKGROUND

This protocol has been developed using existing Council protocols and taking cognisance of the recommendations made by the Bailey Gwynne inquiry, and seeks to outline our current expectations and response to information, concerns, or incidents concerning weapon possession in schools.

Both Early Years, Primary and Secondary Partnership Groups and Police Scotland have been consulted and involved in preparing this Policy.

B GENERAL

1. It is Falkirk Council's clear expectation that no pupil, under any circumstances, should be in possession of any weapon within any school.
2. This clear message of zero tolerance should be re-enforced within all the secondary school handbooks', which should be available on-line via school's websites for all parents and pupils to access. These links should also be clearly given to all P7 pupils/parents as part of their transition programme on joining the school.
3. School's Anti-Bullying Policies should also be updated to include reference to this Policy and Protocol.
4. Pupils should be strongly encouraged to be vigilant and confident about informing an appropriate teacher or adult of any concerns or knowledge they have in relation to weapons possession.

C PSE CURRICULUM

1. Each secondary schools PSE curriculum should include effective and age appropriate materials and learning programmes which highlight the risks and dangers associated with carrying weapons.

D PROTOCOL (INCL. SEARCH & CONFISCATION)

In any instance of reported weapons possession, suspected or otherwise, the safety of pupils and staff is paramount and the following actions should be taken timeously:

1. The member of staff with a suspicion or to whom it is reported should contact the school office immediately and, if the pupil involved is in the class, request the immediate attendance of 2 members of Senior Management Team (SMT), where available. The office staff will contact SMT and advise the School Based Police Officer (SBPO).
2. SMT will speak with the teacher and remove the pupil with his/her possessions from the class for investigation. SMT can only search a pupil's possessions if they give their permission to do so. Legislation does not exist for school management staff to search without consent.
 - If permission is not given, the School Based Police Officer (SBPO) (or Police Scotland if they are not available), should be contacted to undertake the search.
 - The pupil's parents should also be notified.

4. If a pupil is found to have been in possession of a weapon at school, appropriate and robust sanctions must then be agreed with the Headteacher. Consultation will be sought from Police Scotland and if the circumstances dictate, formal action will be undertaken by Officers.

All weapons found must be confiscated, made safe and given to Police Scotland.

5. Reporting Incidents

Police Scotland

Should be notified of every incident of weapons possession, suspected or otherwise. In most circumstances, this would be done normally via the SBPO, however in their absence, referral should be made to the Officer's supervisor.

School Records

In addition, every incident should be formally recorded on the school's management information system, with senior managers, relevant staff and parents/carers contacted. It should be noted that any such incident notified to Police Scotland will also be recorded on their management information systems.

Children's Services Directorate

All incidents should be communicated to the Children's Services Directorate Team by telephone per the serious incidents protocol (circulated 11 March 16) and the "School Incident Report Form" should also be completed and submitted.

Appendix 1 - Provides a copy of the serious incidents protocol letter (11Mar16)

Appendix 2 - Provides details of the contact information

Appendix 3 - Provides a copy of the School Incident Report Form

6. Supporting Police Investigations

Any member of the Senior Management Team involved in the incident will support Police Scotland with any subsequent investigations.

7. Risk Assessment

A risk assessment must be undertaken to ensure that all risks identified are able to be appropriately managed within the school to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

Robert Naylor

Director of Children's Services