



Weapons Policy

The Lodestar Academy

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This policy will be reviewed annually. The academy reserves the right to amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Policy Owner:	Beth Woodward (Headteacher)
Queries to:	Beth Woodward (Headteacher)

Date created:	September 2023
Date of last review:	September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2027

1. What is this Policy About?

In line with the Behaviour Policy, the academy applies the principle of care for oneself and others and is committed to providing a safe place/learning environment, free from the threat of harm or fatality from the use of an offensive weapon such as a knife or firearm. The safety of pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents/carers and visitors who may be involved with educational establishments on a day to day, or less regular, basis is of paramount concern, and must be protected through minimisation of risk of harm.

2. Who Does this Policy Apply to?

All staff, pupils, parent/carers, visitors, volunteers, and contractors.

3. Policy Requirements

Weapons or Firearms

The academy recognises the seriousness of bringing an offensive weapon or firearm onto any educational establishment. To ensure the most effective approach to this issue, the following procedures will be followed:

- **Prevention:** The academy will undertake a range of actions to promote conditions that reduce the risk of a pupil bringing a weapon or firearm into an academy. This includes work with external agencies; counter gang projects and the Police; effective curriculum delivery of Citizenship; PSHE; SMSC; Fundamental British Values; and Prevent Duty. Where a risk assessment or intelligence dictates, and in conjunction with local authority protocol, random searches and magnetic wand searches should be carried out, the frequency of which is to be determined during the risk assessment process and should adequately reflect the risk of firearms or weapons being carried.
- **Pupils at risk of having a weapon on their person:** The academy will undertake a range of actions with regard to pupils who are identified as being at risk of bringing an offensive weapon or firearm onto a premises. This includes seeking information from

referrers, previous schools or academies and external agencies working with a pupil (Children's Services).

The academy will ensure that all staff understand they have a responsibility to act on information from other pupils and stakeholders. Where appropriate, unannounced searches should be carried out; the Police may assist with this.

- **Pupils who have attempted to, or have brought an offensive weapon or firearm into an academy:**

In all cases where possession of a knife or other offensive weapon occurs within an academy or a school it must be reported to the police, a crime will be recorded by police and investigation carried out. The offence should no longer be dealt with purely under school or academy rules, policies and procedures.

The academy staff will take the following actions when a pupil brings or attempts to bring an offensive weapon or firearm into an academy:

- At any point, if there is a concern for the safety and well-being of any pupil or staff member the Police should be called.
- Where offensive weapons are found or abandoned outside the school grounds but in the vicinity. Staff should also follow school procedures in these circumstances.
- Where weapons come into staff possession, they will be retained for collection by the Police Officer dealing.
- The member of staff taking possession of the weapon will document the incident and provide police with a statement regarding the seizure, if requested.
- Police will be granted access and a member of staff who has knowledge of the circumstances, who will be available to meet and explain what has happened.
- Any member of staff who receives knowledge that a pupil may be in possession of a weapon or firearm must immediately inform senior management. Based on a risk assessment of the immediate situation, the pupil should be isolated where possible and asked if they have a weapon or asked to turn out pockets and bags. If the reaction of the pupil is likely to be aggressive, then the Police may be called to assist.
- If a pupil takes out an offensive weapon or firearm at any point the pupil should be isolated where possible and other pupils and staff should be removed to a safe place. The Police should be called immediately.
- The academy will report all cases where pupils are found to have knives in their possession to the Police; ideally a Safer Schools Officer if available, to ensure that any offences are investigated fully.
- Appropriate persons will be informed, such as: parents/carers, the police and/or relevant agencies.
- Any situation will be recorded as an incident on SIMS and in standard paperwork (e.g. pupil files, contact sheet) and monitored.
- In addition, the incident will be recorded on CPOMS and all related parent/carers, Police and/or other agencies linked to ensure a review can take place.
- A Near Miss form should be completed, along with a Risk Assessment form.

- Appropriate referrals to agencies and counselling will be made on behalf of the young person.
- Once an incident and any related Police investigations have been concluded, a review will take place with the trust's Head of Safeguarding, academy SLT and the Director of Education. The aim will be to ensure that the policy was followed correctly, if any lessons are to be learned and to review the Policy.

Subsequent Actions

- In consultation with, or on advice of, police, school staff should document the incident and collect witness statements. Staff need to be trained if providing evidential statements to the police.
- All weapons seized should be kept in a safe place and handling them should be minimised as it could lead to loss of forensic evidence.
- The decision to impose academy-based consequences remain with the Headteacher and governing body. It is important to indicate if the decision is made at the time of the incident or at a later date, and how that is communicated to the pupil and the parent/carer.
- Each incident will be considered, and a measured response will be provided, according to the individual circumstances and severity of the incident.
- A risk assessment should be carried out by the academy with the police on the severity of the offence.
- Headteachers may decide on a Restorative Justice meeting between all parties.

Academy-based consequences could include:

- Restorative approaches
- Internal exclusion
- Fixed term exclusion (for further investigation)
- Permanent exclusion

Legislation

Under the Offensive Weapons Act 1996, a person who, without proof of good reason or lawful authority, has an article with blade or point, or an 'offensive weapon', on school or academy premises is guilty of an offence. It is a particular defence to prove that the article or weapon was needed for use at work, for educational purposes, for religious reasons or as part of any national costume. Imprisonment, a fine, or both follow conviction.

A constable may enter and search academy premises on reasonable grounds for believing that an offence has been or is being committed. If they do so and reasonably suspect that an article or weapon of the kind described has been discovered, they may seize and retain it. They may use reasonable force, if necessary, to gain entry to the premises.

Exceptions

In a very limited number of instances, there may be permitted exceptions to this general prescription. These are that firearms may be held:

- Firearms may be held for the specific, supervised, safe use by a Cadet Force;
- Firearms may be held for safe use by school staff in sporting events (purpose-made firearms known as starting pistols);
- Firearms or weapons may be held for safe use in some scientific experiments.

Under no circumstances may offensive weapons be brought on to or kept at any school or academy with the limited exception of personal items of religious significance as defined and qualified in "The Religious and Cultural Needs of Minority Ethnic Pupils" circulated in May 1999 in relation to schools.

Health and Safety at Work

Following important studies including that of the Working Group on School Security and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust report on Personal Safety and Violence in Schools, this policy on firearms and offensive weapons is intended to protect the health and safety of all.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires The Academy to ensure the provision and maintenance of a safe environment at work for employees and all other persons lawfully present on its premises, that is, in so far as is reasonably practicable to do so, without risk to health or safety, and with adequate regard to facilities and arrangements for their welfare. The Act itself would not, however, prohibit the safe storage of lawfully held firearms or other lawful offensive weapons upon Catch22 MAT premises.

4. Definitions

Firearm is to be interpreted as any lethal barrelled weapon that can (or can be converted to) fire a shot, bullet, or missile.

Offensive weapon is to be interpreted as any device made, used or adapted to cause injury or distress.

5. Related policies

- Behaviour Policy

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

6. Equality Impact Assessment

1. Summary

This EIA is for:	Weapons
EIA completed by:	Executive Assistant
Date of assessment:	July 2021
Assessment approved by:	Education SLT

The Lodestar Academy is committed to always: avoiding the potential for unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and, foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool for identifying whether or not strategies, projects, services, guidance, practices or policies have an adverse or positive impact on a particular group of people or equality group. Whilst currently only public bodies are legally required to complete EIA's under the Equality Act 2010, Catch22 has adopted the process in line with its commitment to continually improve our equality performance.

Policy owners are required to complete or review the assessment indicating whether the policy has a positive, neutral or negative impact for people who it applies to and who share one or more of the 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Definitions are based on the Equality & Human Rights (EHRC) guidance.

Objectives and intended outcomes

This EIA has been completed in order to ensure that the implications and potential impact, positive and negative, of this policy have been fully considered and addressed, whether or not people share a protected characteristic.

2. Potential Impacts, positive and negative

Equality Area	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Please give details including any mitigation for negative impacts
Age Does this policy impact on any particular age groups or people of a certain age?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of age. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of their age.
Disability Does this policy impact on people who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of any disability. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of any disability.
Gender reassignment (transsexual, transgender, trans) Does this policy impact on people who are transitioning from one gender to another (at any stage)	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of their gender at any given time. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of their gender.
Marriage and civil partnership Does this policy impact on people who are legally married or in a civil partnership?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of marital status. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of their marital status.
Pregnancy and maternity (in work this is linked to maternity leave, non-work this is for 26 weeks after giving birth) Does this policy impact on people who are pregnant or in their maternity period	☐	☒	☐	It is not considered that the policy positive or negatively impacts on pregnant women or on staff on maternity or paternity leave.

following the birth of their child?				
Race Does this policy impact on people as defined by their race, colour and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of their race, origin, colour or nationality. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively in these respects.
Religion and belief Does this policy impact on people who practice a particular religion or none, or who hold particular religious or philosophical belief or none?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of religion or beliefs. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively in these respects.
Sex Does this policy impact on people because they are male or female?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all members of staff and pupils regardless of their sex. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of their sex.
Sexual orientation Does this policy impact on people who are sexually attracted towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes?	☐	☒	☐	The policy applies equally to all staff and pupils regardless of their sexual orientation. It is not considered that the policy includes any guidance or rules that may impact either positively or negatively on members of staff or pupils because of their sexual orientation.

3. More information/notes