

**Weapons Protocols for Primary and Secondary Schools in Rochdale**

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This advice is for all schools and colleges in Rochdale to use when a child brings in a weapon either with intent to use or when found carrying a weapon. The advice is intended for pupils aged 11-19.

**Introduction**

**When a young person makes a decision to take a knife or other offensive weapon into a school, it is a serious one with potentially fatal consequences. Furthermore, the carrying of weapons or the thought that other young people carry weapons can have a negative impact on children’s wellbeing, mental health and academic attainment. It can contribute to high levels of stress and anxiety within children and a feeling that violence is inevitable, as opposed to preventable. This has an impact on communities within schools and externally.**

This document has been created to enable all schools in Rochdale to have a consistent approach to dealing with weapons and to understand the law surrounding weapons. It is expected that a multi-agency approach with police, youth services and youth offending team will support children, within the law, who make a decision to carry a weapon and to make positive changes. It applies to primary schools, secondary schools and colleges.

**Statutory guidelines relating to schools**

The DfE statutory guidelines with regards to searching and screening can be found in the document below. In summary, Headteachers and staff authorised by them can search a pupil without consent if there is reasonable ground for suspecting a pupil has a prohibited item. Prohibited items are:

* knives or weapons
* alcohol
* illegal drugs
* stolen items
* tobacco and cigarette papers
* fireworks
* pornographic images
* any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used:
* to commit an offence, or
* to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil).
* Headteachers and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for.

You must be the same sex as the pupil being searched; and there must be a witness (also a staff member) and, if possible, they should be the same sex as the pupil being searched.

There is a limited exception to this rule. You can carry out a search of a pupil of the opposite sex to you and / or without a witness present, but only where you reasonably believe that there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if you do not conduct the search immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff.

School behaviour policies should include a section on searching, screening and confiscation.

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674416/Searching_screening_and_confiscation.pdf>

The law in relation to knives and weapons states that Law states it is an offence to possess an offensive weapon or bladed or sharply pointed article in a public place or on school premises. There is also an aggravated form of these possession offences, committed when the person in possession of the weapon uses it to threaten another in such a way that there is an immediate risk of serious physical harm to that person. Offenders aged 16 or over convicted of these possession offences will (in certain circumstances) receive a minimum custodial sentence.

Police Guidelines on the Investigation, Cautioning and Charging of Knife Crime Offences set out an expectation that those who illegally carry and use knives will be prosecuted. There are also statutory restrictions on the use of cautions for serious offences, including the knife possession offences described in this note. Further details can be found in the embedded document below.

  

**Secondary Pathway Response**

\*In exceptional circumstances, professional judgement will be exercised by the Head in line with the DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education and other statutory Safeguarding documents.

Exclusion also takes place if a child has a knife/weapon on their way to and from school.

**Primary Pathway Response**

Post Exclusion - following an exclusion the following needs to be enacted:

* Risk Assessment to be undertaken by the school.
* School to call a meeting within 10 working days of the incident. Schools to contact YOT on   
  [bandryot@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:bandryot@rochdale.gov.uk) who will liaise with relevant partners – Complex Safeguarding, probation, youth service, early help, police and school. All relevant information to be shared at this meeting. Wider knowledge and issues important for these meetings.
* Youth Offending Team to liaise with the school as to any wider risks posed by the child.
* In the initial meeting wider services to put in package of support for the child and family. All agencies are agreed that the responsibility for reviewing this support must be shared amongst all the different agencies.

**Appendix A**

**Primary school commitment to safeguarding children from knife crime**

1. Primary Schools will ensure that all settings publish a Police advice on Knife Crime Primary schools statement

[H:\2019 2020\Safeguarding\Knife crime\Primary School Information for Website.docx](file:///H:\2019%202020\Safeguarding\Knife%20crime\Primary%20School%20Information%20for%20Website.docx)

1. All Primary School children in Rochdale in Y5 & 6 will be taught about the dangers and consequences of knife crime through the KS2 PSHE curriculum.
2. All Primary School children in Rochdale will attend Crucial Crew before they leave school.
3. Rochdale local authority will support a model of ‘train the trainer’, using REAL trust to deliver training to School Safeguarding leads (DSL) to roll out Knife crime training in schools.
4. Rochdale local authority will target a number of schools in wards with high knife crime statistics and work with Global Policing- Project Chameleon to deliver a 10 week programme ( see clip from Granada reports about the project)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5kBNVxvv1A>

Appendix B

This protocol was initiated by Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership’s Complex Safeguarding Sub Group and authored by the Headteacher of Falinge Park High School, Rochdale.

It has included discussion with:

* National Probation Service
* Rochdale Community Safety Partnership, RBC
* Greater Manchester Police
* Youth Service, RBC
* Youth Offending Service, RBC
* Secondary Headteachers
* Primary Representative Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Protocol was finalised in February 2020 following some refinement to primary schools procedures and the role of YOS.