

ANTI-WEAPON/KNIFE CRIME POLICY
Aberdeen City Council

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FOREWORD

Background to the Policy

Following the tragic event at Cults Academy on the 28th October 2015 an independent multi-agency review was commissioned by members of a Chief Officer's Group.

The overall aim of the review was to provide independent assurance to partners and the public that all circumstances, in relation to the event, were reviewed and appropriate recommendations made for future practice. The review identified 20 recommendations to be actioned. A Northern Alliance Strategic Group was formed and an implementation plan created to meet the requirements of the review recommendations. This work commenced in August 2016 in collaboration with other key partners including the following

- Police Scotland
- Primary & Secondary Head Teachers
- Community Teams
- Social Work Teams
- Pupils
- Parents

The anti -weapons/knife crime policy was created to give direction to schools and their communities in order to meet all of the recommendations from the review.

Legislation

Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995.

Any person who without lawful authority, or reasonable excuse, has with him/her in a public place, any offensive weapon commits an offence.

Children's Rights

Our responsibilities are set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them." (Article 19)

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To provide pupil and parental engagement expectations with regard to anti – weapon/knife crime.
- To provide procedural and operational guidance to all Aberdeen City Council schools and communities with regard to weapon/knife crime.
- To provide guidance on procedures with regard to the searching of pupils' personal belongings.
- To outline links to Aberdeen City Council Anti Bullying Policy

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- To outline additional requirements of schools and communities with regard to anti-weapon/knife crime practices.

To provide pupil and parental engagement expectations with regard to anti - knife/weapon crime

Aberdeen City Council will provide age appropriate learning resources and lessons throughout schools in order to meet the expectations to engage with pupils. In partnership with Police Scotland Aberdeen City Council will deliver anti-weapon/knife crime presentations and assemblies to all Secondary1 and Secondary5 pupils across the city. Primary 7 pupils will receive anti-weapon/knife crime lessons which have been developed from resources shared by the Ben Kinsella Trust.

Posters will be displayed across all schools and educational establishments to highlight the main messages of anti-weapon/knife crime.

Aberdeen City Council will use its websites to offer information on weapon/knife crime and will inform schools of updates.

Every school will receive a certificate promoting a zero tolerance approach to the possession of weapons/knives and these will be clearly displayed for all school visitors to see.

Aberdeen City Council will actively engage with pupil councils and forums to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to present and discuss their questions and views on weapon crime issues. One agenda item per term for pupil voice groups will also be provided to disseminate to their schools and provide feedback. Feedback from pupil groups will help to improve further educational resources and highlight further actions to be taken by Aberdeen City Council to keep the strategy moving forward.

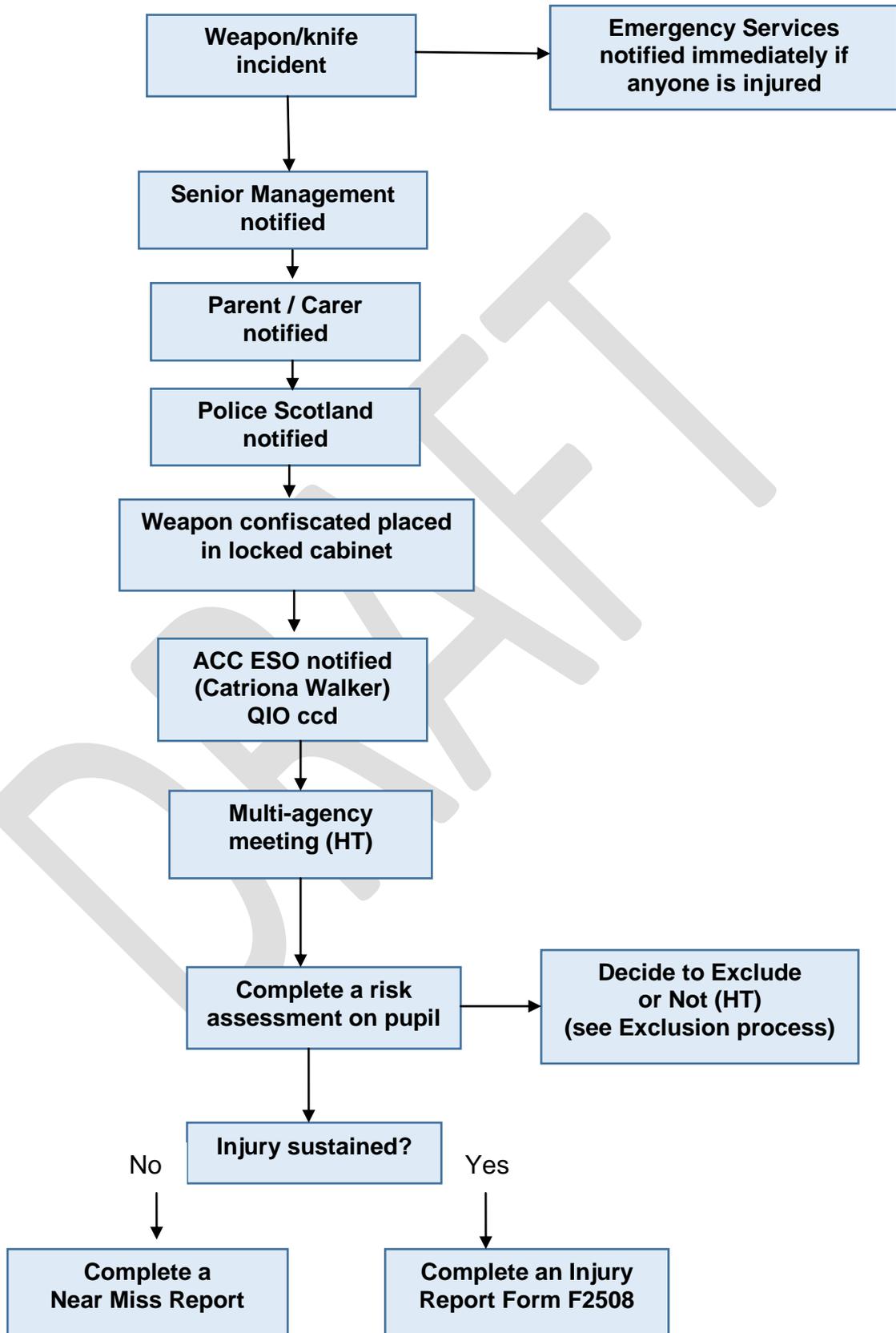
Aberdeen City Council will provide a parent guidance leaflet which presents the facts on weapons crime and the consequences of carrying a weapon/knife. Parents and carers have a responsibility for ensuring that their child receives appropriate guidance, which should include educating them about the dangers of weapons. As well as stressing to young people that they should never carry a weapon Aberdeen City Council would urge parents to encourage their children to share information when they know someone else is carrying a weapon.

Parents will receive a letter from their child's school, setting out the expectations of the school with regard to weapons/knives. It is the parent's responsibility to read the letter, sign it and return it to school. If a child is old enough he/she should also sign the agreement letter. It is important to emphasise that the success of the anti-weapon/knife strategy lies heavily on all adults modelling and presenting the appropriate messages and behaviours.

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To provide procedural and operational guidance to all Aberdeen City Council schools and communities with regard to weapon/knife crime.



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To provide guidance on procedures with regard to the searching of pupils' personal belongings.

If there is reason to believe that a pupil is carrying a knife or other offensive weapon the following steps should be followed –

- In accordance with the law of Scotland searches must be made with the pupil's consent.
- The Head Teacher or nominee can undertake searches of the pupil's belongings where consent is given.
- Parents will be informed of any searches
- Where no consent is forthcoming schools will contact Police Scotland
- Any weapon/knife found in a pupil's possession will be confiscated
- Any weapon/knife found will be stored in a locked cabinet awaiting action by Police Scotland

To outline links to Aberdeen City Council Anti Bullying Policy

The 2009 Policy on Positive Relationships and Anti-bullying approaches in Schools is currently being revised and will be developed as an Education and Children's Services service-wide policy. Once the revised policy is launched, mid- 2017, schools will be expected to develop their own local level policy to meet the needs of their school and school community.

Our expectation for the revised policy, its key messages and ethos is to keep a high profile in every day practice, through relationships between staff, parents/carers, children and young people to foster respectful relationships and behaviours.

In the interim schools should use their existing anti-bullying policies and seek clarification from a relevant member of the Senior Management Team if specific support or guidance is required.

To outline additional requirements of schools and communities with regard to anti-knife and crime practices.

To engage fully with all young people across the city, Aberdeen City Council will distribute anti-weapon/knife posters across communities as well as all educational establishments. The posters will raise awareness on weapon/knife crime, the Law and also the consequences of carrying a weapon/knife. Within communities parental leaflets are also made available to all parents and carers and these provide facts on weapon/knife crime and contain useful contacts for any parent who has a concern on such issues. Parents also have opportunities to voice opinions and gather updated information on weapon/knife crime by attending pupil councils and forums within their child's school/community.

Aberdeen Youth workers receive anti-weapon/knife training which enables them to engage with young people and educate them on the dangers of weapon/knife crime. In 2017 additional resources will be available to schools for various age groups within primary and secondary to ensure an anti-weapon/knife programme is available for the whole school.

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In early 2017 the #pledge will be launched and this will give all young people the opportunity to join together and pledge never to carry a weapon and also to share information, if they know someone is carrying a weapon.

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed October 2017

References

Police Scotland 101
Crimestoppers 0800 555 111
Parentline 08000 28 22 23
Childline 0800 1111
www.benkinsella.org.uk
www.respectme.org.uk

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