



The Grange School and Sports College Policy Document



1. **Title:**

Weapons in School Policy

2. **Purpose:**

To develop a whole school approach to the bringing of a dangerous weapon onto school premises in the context of promoting a safe and secure environment for its staff and students.

3. **Aims:**

The school believes and supports the following educational aims in respect of bringing a dangerous weapon onto school premises.

- To provide accurate information which complies with the DCFS guidelines to its staff, students, parents and carers
- To clarify appropriate procedures in the management of a weapon related incident
- To have a clear and agreed understanding among everyone in the school community about the implications and consequences of bringing a dangerous weapon into school
- To remind students and parents/carers that it is a criminal offence to have an offensive weapon in school and that the penalty is up to 4 years imprisonment and/or a fine
- To respond in a professional way to any persons needing help and supporting
- To enable students to seek confidential advice and support with a named member of staff who will deal with the incident with a caring but professional manner.

4. **Policy:**

- The DCSF guidance advises on:
 - (a) The power to screen students or weapons without suspicion, AND
 - (b) Section (550AA) of the Education Act 1996 as inserted by section 45 of the violent crime reduction act 2006. This came into force in May 2007. This grants Headteachers and staff they authorise, a new power to search students, without consent, when they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a students has a dangerous weapon. The search may be carried out on school premises or anywhere else where a student is under the charge of staff conducting the search, such as during an off-site educational visit.

When the school staff decides to conduct a search under this power they must follow the conditions set out in the Education Act 1996.

Schools are not required to inform parents/carers before a search or seek parental consent, but a parent might feel concerned about their child being searched. So it would be good practice to inform parents of the intended procedure and to invite them into school to discuss the issue.

During a weapons search of a student, his/her searcher and the required 'second person present' must be of the same sex as the student searched. This means that a school which cannot do this must contact the police to carry out the search. Student's possessions can be searched without consent (and the search witnessed) by staff of the opposite sex to the student; the student must be present.

When a student is suspected of carrying a weapon the school may choose to contact the police instead of using the power of search, school staff will manage the student in order to keep other students and staff safe until this assistance arrives.

Above all the Health and Safety of the school's staff and students are paramount.

Confidentiality:

It is unrealistic to guarantee confidentiality in these matters as outside agencies may have to be contacted.

The student will always be told who the information will be passed on to and what will happen with this information.

Exclusion from school:

There will be circumstances where, in the Headteacher's judgement, it is appropriate to exclude or permanently exclude the student for this offence especially as this could contravene the Health and Safety Act.

The student may also be referred on to a pupil referral unit for a risk assessment in order to deem if the student will be a risk to others if he/she returns to main stream education.

Punitive action, especially exclusion from school, against the student could be counter-productive, benefiting neither:

- The school excluding students could make carrying a weapon appear glamorous and exciting to other students, as well as creating unease amongst staff and students
- The student if alienated, the student may become further involved with negative behaviour and problems with their relationship and schooling may be exacerbated
- The behaviour and not the student should be seen as unacceptable. The negative influence that the incident might have on other students should be considered and strategies established to minimise any risk.

5. Relationship to other Policies:

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Behaviours for Learning Policy
- The equal opportunities Policy
- The Health and Safety Policy

6. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation:

The monitoring of the implementation of this policy will be the responsibility of:

- The Deputy Head (student achievement and welfare) in consultation with the SLT, Governors, Students and Personnel Committee.

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The bodies consulted in the development and future revision of this Policy:

- DCSF

7. Implementation and Monitoring of the Policy

The implementation and monitoring of this Policy will be the responsibility of the Deputy Head (student achievement and welfare)

The purpose of reviewing the effectiveness of this Policy is:

- To ensure that this Policy is working and is of value
- To actively work to maintain a safe environment for all
- To check that the correct (updated) procedures are followed at all times and they are effective
- To ensure students are fully supported following the above procedures

Adopted by Full Governing Body on: February 2010

Review Date: 2011