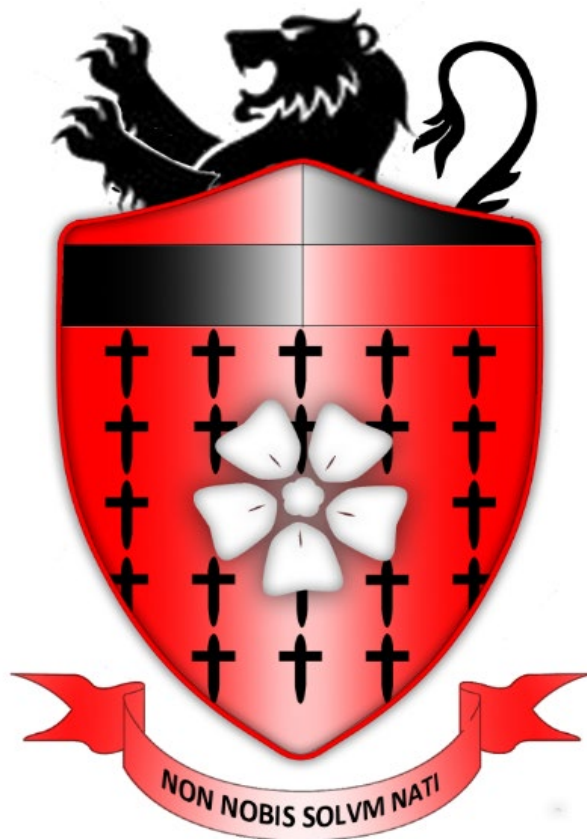


Hornsea School & Language College



Weapons & Knives Policy

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Approved by:	Headteacher: 22.11.23	Governing Body: 22.11.23
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Weapons and Knives Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the HSLC Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy 2023 and the HSLC Lockdown Policy 2023.

Rationale

It is an offence under section 139A of the Criminal Justice Act 1998 to carry an offensive weapon or knife on school premises. Section 45 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 amends the Education Act 1996 and makes provision for members of staff to search pupils.

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. It is an arrestable offence for any person to carry any offensive weapons which has a blade or is sharply pointed, except a folding pocketknife with a cutting edge of three inches or less. However, in the interests of the safety and security of all HSLC pupils and staff, **the carrying of ANY weapons, knives or bladed articles (including razor/sharpening blades) of any shape or size is STRICTLY FORBIDDEN on the school premises.**

Any incident involving students bringing offensive weapons / bladed articles on to the school site and / or being in possession of such items will be considered initially by the school as a 'serious one off incident' and as such will prompt consideration of all disciplinary options available to school, up to and including permanent exclusion. HSLC will continue to adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach in this area. Incidents of this nature will routinely involve school seeking support from the Police and also communication information as a safeguarding concern.

In the context of this Policy, a weapon viewed as any article that could be used to injure someone and serves no other purpose in the school context, regardless of intent. School along with partner agencies, will always seek to establish supporting information and context to inform decision making but the default starting position is as outlined above. Anybody wishing to carry a 'knife' for religious reasons, must first get explicit written permission from the Headteacher to do so. This is for no reason other than to ensure that all safeguarding expectations are fully met.

Staff Involvement where a weapon is suspected:

If a pupil is brandishing a weapon or knife in an aggressive manner, every attempt should be made to evacuate other pupils and staff from that area. Under no circumstances should a member of staff confront the offending pupil nor in any way put him or her at risk. The police will be called as a matter of urgency and the HSLC Lockdown policy will be implemented if necessary, following the Senior Leadership Team/Head Teacher being made aware of the incident.

Where possible, staff should not confront a pupil or person suspected of possessing an offensive weapon in the presence of other pupils. Preferably two or more members of staff should divert the pupil or person to a place where no other pupils are present. Alternatively other pupils should be removed from the area.

Where there is reasonable belief that a pupil may be carrying an offensive weapon or blade, it might be appropriate for a pupil, who is calm and relaxed and who has agreed to co-operate, to empty his or her own pockets/bag as per the HSLC Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy 2023. If there remains a concern that the pupil may have hidden a weapon on his/her person or somewhere on the premises, then further advice should be sought from the police immediately. The carrying of an offensive weapon places the student at risk of a permanent exclusion from our school.

Where the person suspected of carrying a weapon is not a registered HSLC pupil, or the incident takes place outside the school premises, the police must always be contacted as a matter of urgency. In addition, any such incidents and concerns will also be considered in terms of school and local safeguarding protocols and responsibilities

Right to Search

In the circumstances of identified or suspected possession of knives / weapons, great care must be taken and very careful consideration given to the unique circumstances and presentation of a pupil prior to any search. If there are any concerns the Police should be contacted immediately in line with the above.

Headteachers and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item - knives, bladed articles and weapons are categorised as prohibited items. Furthermore, School staff can seize any prohibited item found as a result of a search

Weapons or knives confiscated by school:

If a member of staff takes possession of a knife or other weapon brought to school, the item should be immediately taken to a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will secure it in a locked cupboard and:

- a) Arrange without delay to surrender it to the police (if the weapon contravenes the Offensive Weapons Act 1996)
- b) If appropriate, after careful consideration of specific circumstances and risk issues, arrange for it to be taken away by the parent/guardian of the pupil. This would then be dealt with as a matter of school discipline and a record should be made that the item has been returned to the parent/guardian.

(NB: Weapons such as flick knives, knuckle-dusters etc that are per se offensive should NOT be returned under any circumstances).

Arrests on school premises:

Unless the circumstances make it unavoidable, it is preferable for police officers to avoid making arrests on school premises. If it proves necessary, it should be done with the co-operation of the school and as discreetly as possible.

NB: If an item that could be construed as a weapon is required for a particular lesson, then this must be with prior consultation and agreement with the subject teacher. The subject teacher should ensure the item is kept in a secure place and only returned at 3.00pm