

Catch22 College Policy

Weapons Policy

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Catch22 reserves the right to amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Policy Owner:	Catch22 Colleges
Queries to:	Laura Hitchbourne
Date created:	7th May 2025
Date of last review:	01 st November 2025
Date of next review:	31 st August 2026
Catch22 group, entity, hub:	Catch22 Colleges
4Policies level (all staff or managers only)	All Catch22 College Staff

Document Version Control & Changes

Version	Last modified	By	Changes Made
1.0	7th May 2025	Will Duke-Oddy - Quality & Curriculum Manager - OSH	New Policy Created
2.0	01st November 2025	Laura Hitchbourne	N/A

1. What is the policy about?

This policy outlines Catch22 Colleges' commitment to maintaining a safe and inclusive learning environment by preventing and responding to the possession or use of offensive weapons, such as knives or firearms, on college premises. It sets out clear expectations for staff, learners, parents/carers, visitors, and contractors, detailing preventative education, partnership working, search procedures, and incident responses. The policy ensures compliance with legal and safeguarding requirements, including the Offensive Weapons Act, the Education Act, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), to protect the safety and wellbeing of everyone within the college community.

2. Who does this policy apply to:

All Catch22 College staff, learners, parents/guardians, governing bodies, volunteers and contractors.

3. Policy Requirements

This policy aligns with the Behaviour Policy to ensure Catch22 Colleges remain safe, inclusive learning environments free from the threat of harm or fatality caused by offensive weapons such as knives or firearms. The safety of learners, staff, parents/carers, visitors, and contractors is of paramount importance.

Scope

This policy applies to all Catch22 College staff, learners, parents/carers, visitors, volunteers, and contractors.

Policy Statement

Bringing weapons or firearms onto college premises is strictly prohibited and is treated with the utmost seriousness. Catch22 Colleges are committed to taking preventative measures, responding effectively to incidents, and complying with legal and safeguarding obligations.

Preventative Measures

To minimise risks Catch22 Colleges will:

- Deliver curriculum content addressing personal safety, citizenship, and the dangers of carrying weapons through PSHE, British Values, and Prevent Duty initiatives.
 - This is to include targeted and specialised Catch22 internal partnerships including Catch22 County Lines & Catch22 Gangs sessions.
- Collaborate with external agencies such as the police and counter-gang programs.
- Conduct risk-based searches, including random or magnetic wand searches, in accordance with local authority protocols.

Responding to Incidents

Immediate Actions

- **If a weapon is suspected or found:**
 - Isolate the learner, ensuring the safety of others.
 - Follow the 'Use of Powers of Search and Confiscation' set out in Catch22 Colleges Behaviour & Code of Conduct Policy'.
 - Contact the police if safety concerns arise.
 - Document and retain any discovered weapon for police collection.
 - Inform parents/carers and relevant agencies within 24 hours.
 - Record the incident on both 'Datix' & CPOMS.
- **If a weapon is brandished:**
 - Remove all individuals to safety and call the police immediately.

Subsequent Actions

- Cooperate fully with police investigations and provide statements if required.
- Apply college sanctions based on the severity of the incident, which may include restorative justice, fixed-term exclusion, or permanent exclusion.
- Conduct a post-incident review with SLT and safeguarding leads to evaluate adherence to the policy and identify areas for improvement.
- Provide ongoing support to all affected parties (staff and learners).

Legal Framework

Nationally;

Under the Offensive Weapons Act 1996:

- It is illegal to possess a bladed article, offensive weapon, or firearm on college premises without lawful authority or good reason.
- Lawful exceptions include items for specific cultural, religious, or educational purposes, subject to strict conditions.

The **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** obligates Catch22 Colleges to ensure a safe environment for all persons on its premises.

Education Act 1996 – It is an offence to carry a weapon on school/college premises.

Searching, screening and confiscation guidance (DfE) – Staff can search for weapons without consent, and can involve police.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) – Sets safeguarding duties which include responding to potential weapon possession.

Prevent Duty – Applies when there's a risk of radicalisation or extremist use of weapons.

Local Authority Variation;

Despite national guidance, local protocols can vary depending on:

- Local police force practices (e.g. how quickly they respond, what level of evidence is required to escalate).
- Local safeguarding arrangements (some LAs have specific procedures to report or escalate concerns).
- Multi-agency panels or teams, e.g. a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), Safer Schools Officers, Youth Justice, etc.

DSLs for Catch22 Colleges should consult their local authority's safeguarding team or education department for any protocols or partnerships they expect to be followed.

Definitions

- **Bladed Article:** Any item with a blade or sharp point.
- **Firearm:** Any lethal barrelled weapon capable of firing a shot or missile.
- **Offensive Weapon:** Any device made, used, or adapted to cause harm or distress.

Review and Monitoring

- All incidents will be reviewed post-resolution, with findings used to update risk assessments and improve preventative measures.

- The policy will undergo annual review or sooner if significant incidents or legislative changes occur.

4. Related Policies

- Health & Safety Policy
- Behaviour & Code of Conduct Policy