



Weapons in Schools and Educational Settings

Guidance

This is a guidance note to support decision making for staff in Cardiff Education Settings

Any time a staff member, student, or visitor feels **unsafe or at immediate risk**, they must contact emergency services by dialling 999 without delay.



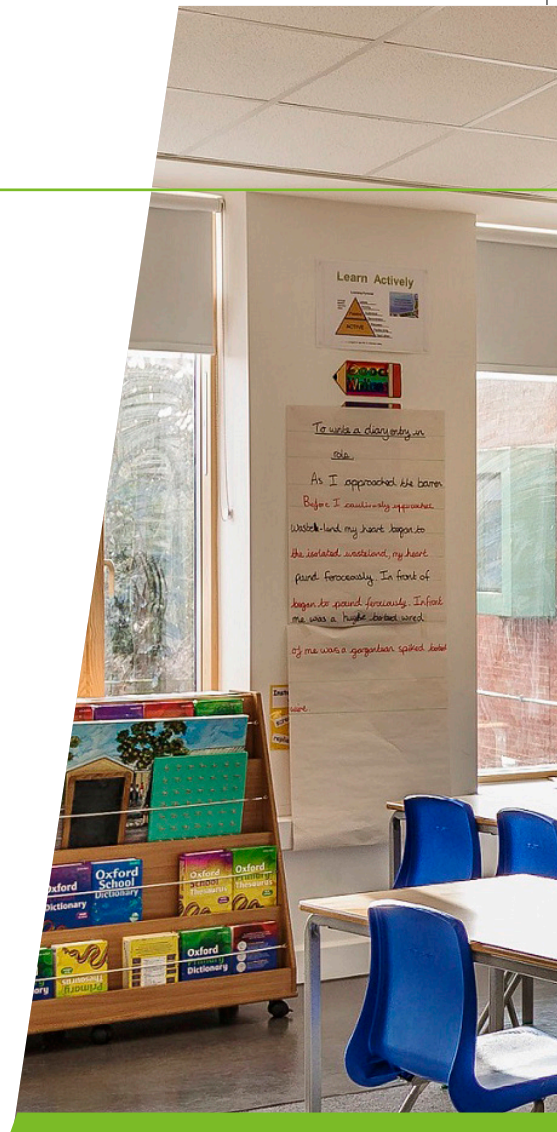


Education settings play a crucial role in violence prevention. These are places where children and young people are socialised into societal norms, learn about relationships with their peer group and community, develop a sense of belonging and acquire knowledge, skills and experience.”

Wales Without Violence Framework (2023)

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SECTION 1:

Introduction

GUIDANCE STATEMENT

The guidance within this document is for schools (Primary, Secondary and Specialist) and all educational settings. It should be considered when a young person is found in possession of a weapon on an education establishment's site whether the possession is deliberate or unintentional.

Cardiff Council and our partners are keen to support all schools and educational settings to tackle the issue of weapon possession.

This document has been created to enable schools and educational settings to have a consistent approach when dealing with weapons and to understand the legal requirements around these events. It is expected that there will be a multi-agency approach involving Education, Police, Children's Services, the Youth Service and the Youth Justice Service to support the school or educational setting in identifying suitable early interventions to disrupt the current behaviour patterns and influence positive change.

South Wales Police and Customer and Protective Services in Cardiff Council have supported officers in the development of this document and have advised throughout the creation. It provides recommended approaches and considerations for managing incidents involving weapons. However, **it is not a prescriptive or exhaustive manual.**

All staff must exercise their professional judgement including a dynamic risk assessment when responding to challenging or potentially unsafe situations. Each incident may present unique circumstances that require discretion, adaptability, and prioritisation for the safety of staff and students.

All staff must exercise their professional judgement when responding to challenging or potentially unsafe situations.

If at any time a staff member, student, or visitor feels **unsafe or at immediate risk**, they must **contact emergency services by dialling 999 without delay.**



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this guide is to ensure:

- ▶ A consistent and fair approach when young people are found to be in possession of a weapon.
- ▶ Help and encourage all stakeholders to understand the requirements and role when dealing with young people in possession of a weapon.
- ▶ Everyone is aware of the legislation for possessing a weapon.
- ▶ All stakeholders are aware of the requirements of safely searching young people.
- ▶ Schools and education settings understand how to safely handle and store a weapon.
- ▶ All school staff understand the requirements of reporting incidents to South Wales Police, Police Youth Engagement Officers and Cardiff Council Local Authority.
- ▶ All stakeholders are aware of the organisations that can support schools and educational settings to address behaviours and promote positive behaviour.
- ▶ Provide safeguarding and support to all learners, including young people with the weapon.

SECTION 2:

Preventative Strategies

Naturally it is hoped that the scenarios discussed in this guide never come to reality. However, it is important to recognise the issues facing young people today and support them to make positive choices. Section Eleven contains a list of services that can support young people as well as work with schools to create a comprehensive preventive strategy in their setting.

Studies have shown that many young people are choosing to carry weapons for three broad explanations:

- ▶ **Self protection and fear** – particularly for young people who have previously been a victim of crime. They may carry a weapon for self defence.
- ▶ **Self presentation** – particularly for young people who want ‘street credibility’ and ‘respect’
- ▶ **Utility (offensive weapon carrying)** – particularly for young people who use weapons to facilitate other behaviours such as theft, sexual assault, injury and serious harm.

Outlined below are a number of preventive strategies that can be used to support schools and educational settings to help minimise the risks of incidents taking place:

1. RECOGNITION

Firstly, and most importantly for educational settings, is recognising that incidents where children bring weapons onto site may happen intentionally as well as unintentionally even with the most rigorous of policies. In all cases, the immediate actions taken by staff must be prompt, proportional and consistent. This means that all staff must know and understand the guidance, as well as the expectations of safeguarding young people.

Secondly, it is essential that all staff are fully aware of the reasons why young people may feel the need to possess a weapon and the contextual issues facing young people such as peer pressure, and child criminal exploitation for example.

2. CREATING A SAFEGUARDING CULTURE

For all members of an educational provision to feel safe, it is necessary that there is a strong ethos and culture of safeguarding within the provision that everyone agrees to and works towards.

By creating a strong culture of safeguarding, all individuals accessing the site should feel able to raise concerns, ask for support and provide a consistent response to incidents. To create this environment, all staff should receive appropriate training and understand the expectations for them. This will help minimise and avoid any confusion in the event of a critical incident. Some members of staff will be ‘Violence Prevention Leads’ and will receive additional training.



3. EFFECTIVE USE OF THE CURRICULUM

There are several opportunities in 'Curriculum for Wales', particularly the 'Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning' to discuss and support young people in understanding the risks around possessing and using a weapon. This includes opportunities to discuss contextual issues around the local area, peer influences, ways to respond to situations, and how decision-making impacts on the quality of their lives and others. A curriculum that allows open and strong discussion may act preventively to allow young people to recognise issues and consequences. There are many services that provide resources that can support teaching and learning about weapons.

4. WORKING WITH OTHER EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

There may be situations where it is necessary to safeguard and discuss young people from a setting/s other than your own. This maybe due to incidents in the community or external young people attending the educational setting. The sharing of information and intelligence is vital in ensuring the safeguarding of all young people, staff and education communities.

5. WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents and carers need to be aware of the educational provisions' guidance around weapons and are supportive of the steps that need to be taken following an incident. This will be communicated through the 'Home School Agreement'. Parents and carers will also receive literature explaining this guidance, which will help them to understand the response taken by staff to a weapon being found on site at an education setting. When a young person is enrolled in the school or educational setting, this should be included in the Induction pack given to parents and carers.

Parents should always be vigilant of their children's behaviours and seek support when necessary. It is important that if parents/carers suspect or know that their child may be in possession of a weapon, they should inform the school and police immediately to protect their child and others. This could prevent incidents, as well as allow immediate support and interventions to be put in place.

Parents and carers will be a key part of any Incident Review Meeting and creating a support plan for young people.

6. COMMUNITY REPORTING

TES (owners of MyConcern) have made two additional products available to schools alongside MyConcern and links to these will be on their MyConcern login page. The school's MyConcern Administrator needs to grant access permissions to designated staff for these products to be enabled.

Community Reporting is an open access reporting system that will allow anyone a school chooses to be able to report a safeguarding concern and could be used by schools to encourage pupils to report concerns about weapons. Community Reporting can be targeted at specific groups such as pupils and parents or the wider community.

It's simple to set up and build a reporting form which can be accessed via a QR code or web link which takes the person to a simple form which is integrated with MyConcern so concerns can be viewed via the MyConcern dashboard.

Safeguarding concerns can be reported anonymously if schools choose to set it up as such. Feedback from those already using the system have said that it has helped children to make disclosures, assisted with early intervention, helped embed an open culture of safeguarding and for schools to be better placed to provide support for anyone who needs it.

7. WORKING WITH PARTNERSHIP AGENCIES AND SIGNPOSTING SERVICES

There are a number of organisations and agencies that can support educational settings to implement violence preventative strategies and procedures in education settings. Seeking advice and guidance can be an important preventive measure to reduce issues from escalating. External agencies can be invited to provide a range of support such as sessions and talk to young people about specific issues and training for staff (See Section 13).

SECTION 3:

Responding if a Weapon is Suspected

The following guidance is to support stakeholders around the steps to take when responding to an incident in which a young person is suspected of possessing a weapon on school grounds or taking a weapon from within the setting e.g., a knife from the canteen.

Please refer to the flowchart (page 10) for detailed steps on how to respond to this situation. It is important to consider the following points.

A SUSPICION MAY INCLUDE:

- ▶ Intelligence from staff, a parent or pupil e.g. suspected sighting, overheard conversation etc.
- ▶ Intelligence from the community
- ▶ Behaviour of the young person e.g. language and/or actions
- ▶ CCTV footage
- ▶ Information from a professional (case worker/social worker)
- ▶ Police Public Protection Notice (PPN)
- ▶ Information via social media





WHAT IS NEEDED TO COMPLETE A SEARCH

When completing a search, please ensure the following:

- ▶ There are two members of staff present.
- ▶ The purpose of the search is explained to the young person.
- ▶ The search is conducted discreetly.
- ▶ Easy access to the correct equipment: slash-proof gloves and a search wand.
- ▶ The relevant recording documentation is completed, outlined in Section 8 of this document.
- ▶ Parents/carers are informed that a search has taken place and the reasons for this have been clearly explained.
- ▶ If a weapon has been found, an Incident Review Meeting will be scheduled and Police informed.

It is recommended, when conducting a search, to use a search wand. This is an effective method for ensuring the safety of the person conducting the search as well as the person being searched. In Section 9 (Page 24), guidance can be found on how to safely conduct a search using a search wand.

If, following a search, no items are found, but you still have reasonable suspicion, please consider additional support for the young person e.g. Youth Mentor, Youth Justice Services, Police Youth Engagement Officer. Advice from the Professional Advice Line (03000 133 133) should be considered if you have safeguarding concerns about the young person.

If a young person refuses to be searched, but you have reasonable grounds to suspect they are in possession of a weapon or a weapon may have been hidden off site or in the educational setting, call 999 and/or the school's Police Youth Engagement Officer for further support.

If at any point there is risk to staff or others, call 999.

Staff wellbeing to be supported following any incidents.

There is suspicion that a young person has a weapon in their bag, coat, or on their person.

Inform headteacher or senior member of staff.

Advise the young person that you have information that suggests they possess a weapon.

Inform young person you have the power to search them/ their belongings.

Denies having weapon

Refuses

Complies

Undertake search using Search Wand (see page 24 for guidance on how to conduct a search)

Weapon not found

Contact parents/carers immediately to inform them about the search.

Complete recording documentation and record on MyConcern.

Student remains in setting.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

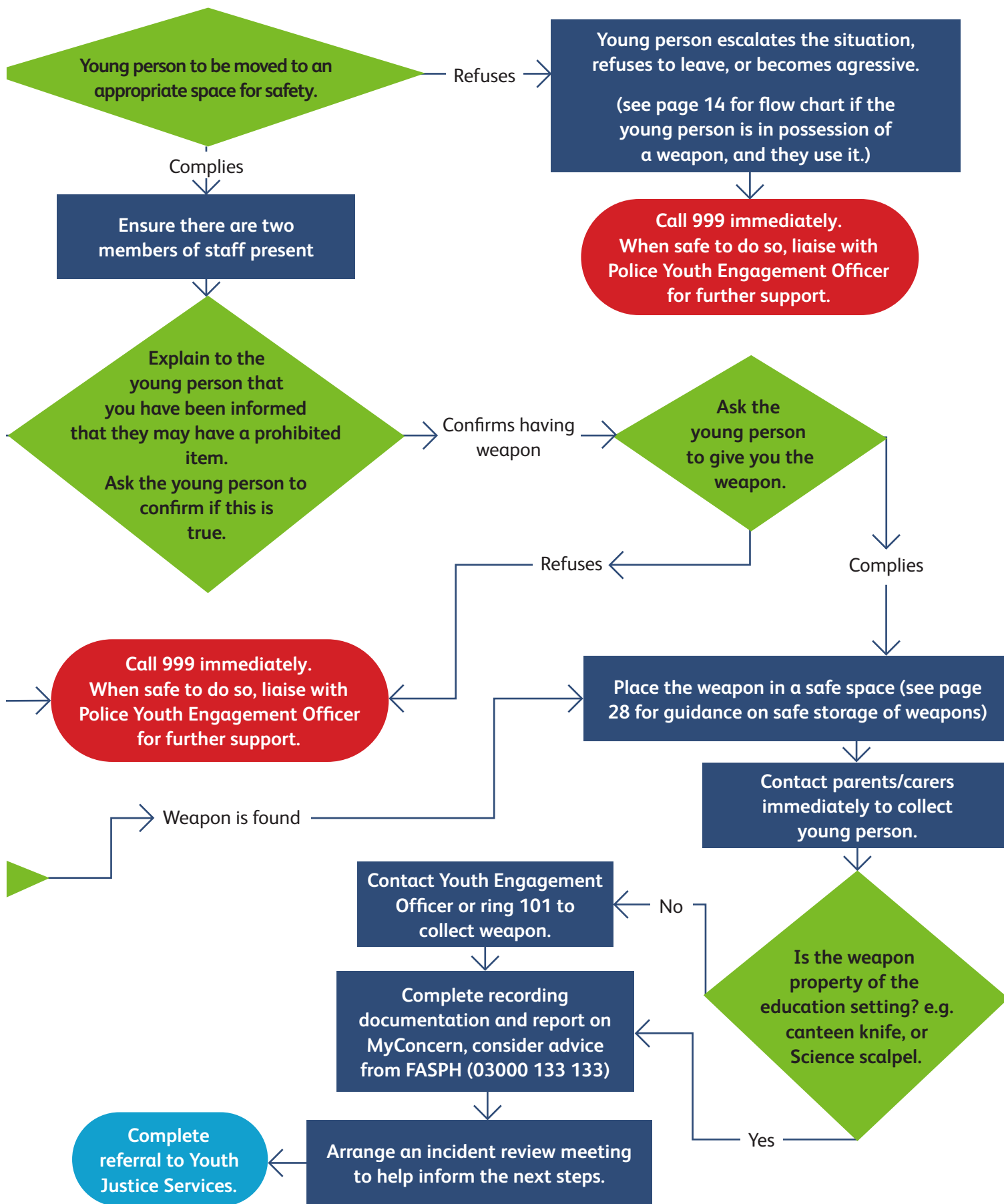
- ▶ Where has the information come from?
- ▶ Test the accuracy of the information
- ▶ What are the circumstances?
- ▶ Gather as much information as possible
- ▶ Record the information

CONSIDER VULNERABILITY:

- ▶ Existing Concerns about criminal exploitation
- ▶ Mental health needs
- ▶ Are they harming themselves or others?
- ▶ Have there been other incidents of bullying or peer to peer abuse?
- ▶ Are there any additional learning needs?
- ▶ Do they have a Lead Professional?

If at any point there is risk to staff or others, call 999.

Staff wellbeing to be supported following any incidents.



This provides recommended approaches and considerations for managing incidents involving weapons. It is **not a prescriptive or exhaustive manual**. All staff must exercise their professional judgment including a dynamic risk assessment when responding to challenging or potentially unsafe situations. Each incident may present unique circumstances that require discretion, adaptability, and prioritisation for the safety of staff and students.

HEDDLU POLICE

SECTION 4:

Responding if a Weapon is Found

IMMEDIATE ACTION

If it has been identified that a weapon is on site and the appropriate searching and confiscating has occurred, then a full and thorough investigation into what has occurred needs to take place.

If it can be proven that a weapon was bought on site with intent to harm, then immediate action will occur including contacting the Police and parents/carers immediately. Under the updated Offensive Weapon Act 2019 police have the power to enter, intervene and search the school in the event of the threat of, or use of a weapon (as per stated list) on the school site. The pupil should be isolated immediately.

If the weapon has been identified because it has been used to harm, e.g. another pupil or member of staff, the school will instigate its critical incident management protocols immediately inclusive of lock down procedures, secure and isolate the student and weapon if possible, and contact the police immediately.

If the context of the situation is not so easily identified, then a full and thorough investigation is required to establish the school's next course of action.

GATHERING THE FACTS

In all circumstances, staff will speak to all the pupils and staff involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them. They will use consistent language and open questions for each account. This will occur by asking the pupils directly to tell you what has happened.

Staff should only interrupt the pupil to gain clarity with open questions, 'where, when, why, who'.

This should include the following questions:

- ▶ What happened?
- ▶ Who observed the incident?
- ▶ What was seen?
- ▶ What was heard?
- ▶ Did anyone intervene?

A full and clear record of exactly what the pupil has said in their own language will be made and no individual interpretation of the facts made, as this could impact on the disclosure.



This should be recorded on Local Authority's Professional Portal via [Logon](#) and uploaded to MyConcern. If any support is needed, please email WISSESIRM@cardiff.gov.uk.

DECIDING THE NEXT STEPS

The school or education setting will need to decide how the young person can remain at their provision.

It will be necessary to complete a Safety Plan to assess the risks using the key questions:

- ▶ How can the young person feel safe?
- ▶ How can staff feel safe?
- ▶ How can other young people feel safe?

In circumstances where the risks are too high to remain at the setting, a referral to the Fair Access Panel needs to be considered alongside a robust Safety Plan. This is a positive step to take to find an alternative school or educational provision rather than a permanent exclusion and the young people are at risk in the community.

REVIEW OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Following any incident of harm, it is necessary for the provision to consider if anything could have been done differently. It is important to identify if any internal lessons can be learnt and what necessary changes within the provision might need to occur.

This demonstrates the provision's commitment to continually reviewing its policies and systems in effectively keeping young people safe. Any review of circumstances will then be discussed between senior leadership, the Governing Body and settings to put immediate and necessary changes into effect. It is recognised that violence at work incidents can be triggering to staff. This is considered in further detail, including offers of support, in Section 7 (page 21) and Section 13 (page 30).

RETURNING TO SCHOOL AND SAFETY PLANNING

Safety planning is a positive way of supporting a child to benefit from a planned approach to support or intervention following an incident where a weapon has been brought to a provision or where a young person has accessed a weapon (e.g. a knife within a provision such as in a staff room or kitchen area).

Safety plans support the young person by considering the behaviour behind the use of a weapon and plan ways to manage any identified risks/triggers and seek support from adults and peers.

They include the child, their parents/carers and staff, and are a planned intervention to support young people in feeling secure in the school/setting, helping young people identify behaviours that may leave them feeling anxious or at risk and have strategies that they can apply to keep themselves feeling safe. It may be helpful for schools to consider inviting relevant professionals to this meeting e.g., Educational Psychologist (EP) or Specialist Teacher to help further explore relevant contributing factors and ways forward

The language of safety planning is more positive than risk assessment and can give security to the young person that a joined-up approach is being followed by all in school.

Safety Plans can be discussed in the Incident Review Meetings and actioned by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

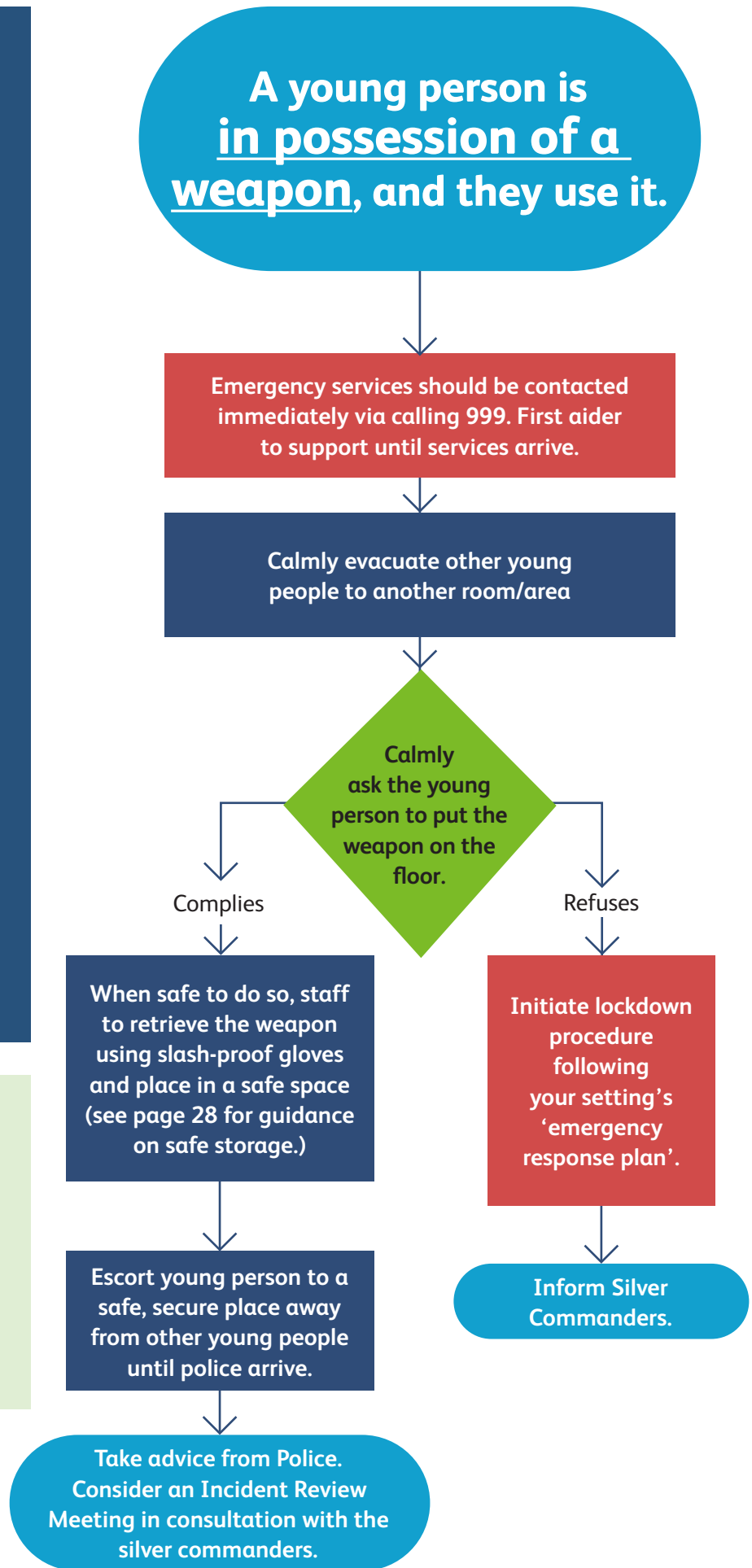
CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- ▶ Where has the information come from?
- ▶ Test the accuracy of the information
- ▶ What are the circumstances?
- ▶ Gather as much information as possible
- ▶ Record the information

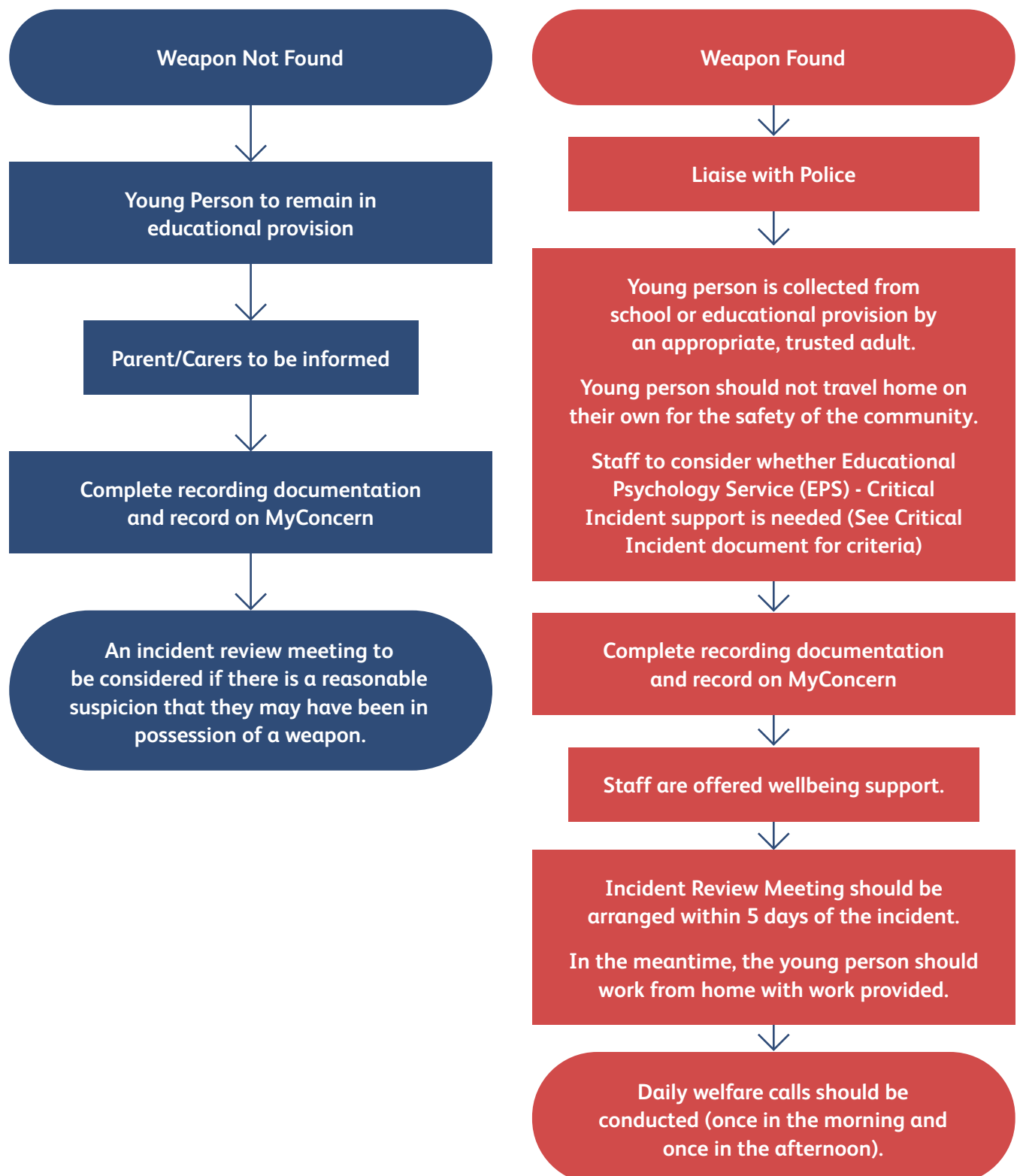
CONSIDER VULNERABILITY:

- ▶ Existing Concerns about criminal exploitation
- ▶ Mental health needs
- ▶ Are they harming themselves or others?
- ▶ Have there been other incidents of bullying or peer to peer abuse?
- ▶ Are there any additional learning needs?
- ▶ Do they have a Lead Professional?

This provides recommended approaches and considerations for managing incidents involving weapons. **It is not a prescriptive or exhaustive manual. All staff must exercise their professional judgment** including a dynamic risk assessment when responding to challenging or potentially unsafe situations. Each incident may present unique circumstances that require discretion, adaptability, and prioritisation for the safety of staff and students.



Actions to be Taken Following an Incident





SECTION 5:

Guidance on Incident Review Meetings and Violence Prevention Leads

An Incident Review Meeting will need to be arranged in circumstances where a weapon is found but not used.

It is a multi-agency response to understand the reasons behind the incident taking place and discuss an appropriate package of support for the young person and the educational setting. As part of this, staff and the young person will have the chance to explain the circumstances that led to the incident, what concerns they have identified and what they require support with.

In circumstances where a weapon was not found, but it is suspected that the young person might have had one, or where a weapon was used, and the Police are involved consideration can still be given to coordinating an Incident Review Meeting.

KEY INFORMATION ABOUT INCIDENT REVIEW MEETINGS

It is important to ensure consistency across all education settings. The following steps should be taken:

- ▶ The young person would not return to the provision until the Incident Review Meeting has taken place.
- ▶ An Incident Review Meeting should take place **within 5 school days of the incident**.
- ▶ A safety plan needs to be drafted as part of the Incident Review Meeting and implemented within 14 days of the meeting taking place.
- ▶ In order to safeguard the young person whilst at home, the provision should provide appropriate work and a minimum of one daily welfare check to the young person via a phone call. This should be from a member of staff with a relationship to the young person (e.g. Senior Leadership Team, pastoral staff, Head of Year, Youth Worker).
- ▶ For weapons-related incidents, headteachers may authorise up to five days of home learning instead of exclusion, in line with Welsh Government guidance. This must be properly recorded and include continued off-site education until the Incident Review Meeting and a formal decision is made regarding the learners ongoing placement. Further information on this is outlined in the Legal Guidance, Section 12.
- ▶ An investigation of circumstances should take place, within the period of home working, as to why the young person brought this weapon into school or educational provision. **This is a trauma informed investigation rather than a criminal investigation. It must be needs led.**
- ▶ Parents and/or carers should be invited to a meeting at the education provision to understand more.
- ▶ A multi-agency meeting will take place, chaired by the school's Violence Prevention Lead.
- ▶ The young person should be able to have a say in who the trusted adult is that attends the meeting, such as a Youth Worker, Youth Justice Services Case Worker, Social Worker or a Family Member.
- ▶ The education setting should complete the incident reporting form (see Toolkit A) and email the form to WISIESIRM@cardiff.go.uk on completion.
- ▶ Ensure the Family Advice Support and Protection Hub FASPH (03000 133 133) has been contacted, and if requested a Multi Agency Referral has been submitted to ensure ongoing support for the young person.



VIOLENCE PREVENTION LEADS

It is recommended that every school and educational setting has a Violence Prevention Lead. Their role is vital role in fostering a safe and supportive environment for young people, staff, and the wider school community. We recommend that there is more than one Violence Prevention Lead and in larger Educational Settings there may be a number of people. This position involves leading initiatives and promoting awareness to prevent violence and ensure a peaceful and safe atmosphere conducive to learning and personal growth. This role can be shared by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

EXPECTED TO DO:

- ▶ Chair Incident Review Meetings (IRM)
- ▶ Co-ordinate Safety Plan for young person.
- ▶ Liaise with the School Based Violence Task Group
- ▶ Ensure staff complete and submit the necessary paperwork.
- ▶ Be familiar and aware of the Educational Psychology Service Critical Incident document

NOT EXPECTED TO DO:

- ▶ Conduct every search
- ▶ Communicate with every young person's parents/carers involved in a search or incident.
- ▶ Co-ordinate collections of weapons by South Wales Police.
- ▶ Identify training and resources.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Advocacy

- ▶ Communicate and collaborate with staff, students, parents, and external agencies to promote violence-free environments.
- ▶ Develop and maintain a visible and approachable presence to encourage open dialogue about safety concerns and solutions

Programme Development and Implementation

- ▶ Integrate violence prevention initiatives into the school curriculum, ensuring they align with educational goals and standards; e.g. annual Violence Prevention Day.

Training

- ▶ Facilitate training sessions to equip the education community with the skills needed to identify, prevent, and respond to violence effectively.

Support

- ▶ Offer support to students affected by violence and those exhibiting concerning behaviours.
- ▶ Work closely with school staff to ensure that they access support if they have been affected by violence at work.



[Violence Prevention Lead Role Profile](#)

ARRANGING THE INCIDENT REVIEW MEETING

The following people should be involved:

- ▶ The Violence Prevention Lead (within the school)
- ▶ Police Youth Engagement Officer
- ▶ The young person's appropriate adult
- ▶ A school Representative
- ▶ The young person
- ▶ A member of the relevant Specialist Teaching Team (e.g. Emotional Health and Wellbeing, Speech and Language Team, Autism).
- ▶ Educational Psychologist (EP)

If the young person is engaging with other services, they should be informed too. These agencies could be:

- ▶ Social Worker
- ▶ Family Support Worker (e.g. ARC)
- ▶ Cardiff Youth Service
- ▶ Youth Justice Service Case Manager
- ▶ Third party agency worker e.g. St Giles, Side Step, Think Safe.



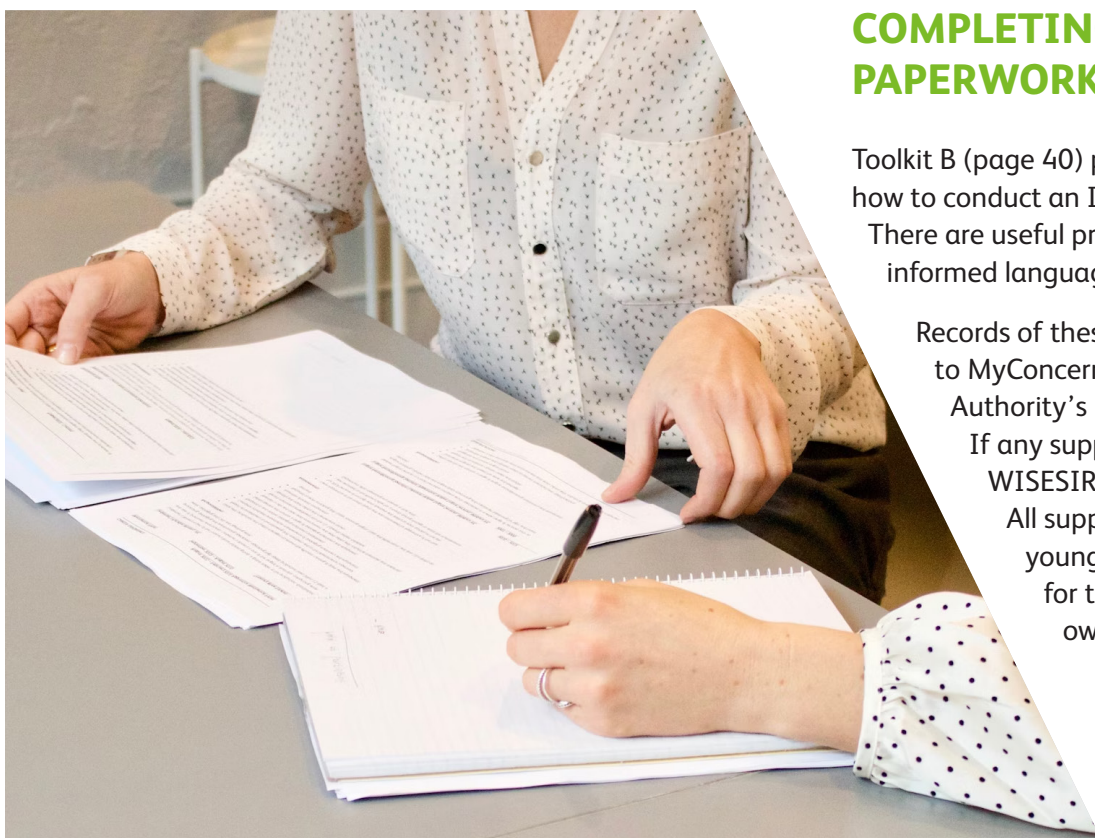
COMPLETING THE NECESSARY PAPERWORK

Toolkit B (page 40) provides a clear structure of how to conduct an Incident Review Meeting. There are useful prompts written in trauma-informed language to guide staff.

Records of these meetings should be uploaded to MyConcern and submitted to Local Authority's Professional Portal via [Logon](#).

If any support is needed, please email WISESIRM@cardiff.gov.uk

All support services involved with the young person should receive a copy for their records in line with their own data retention policies.

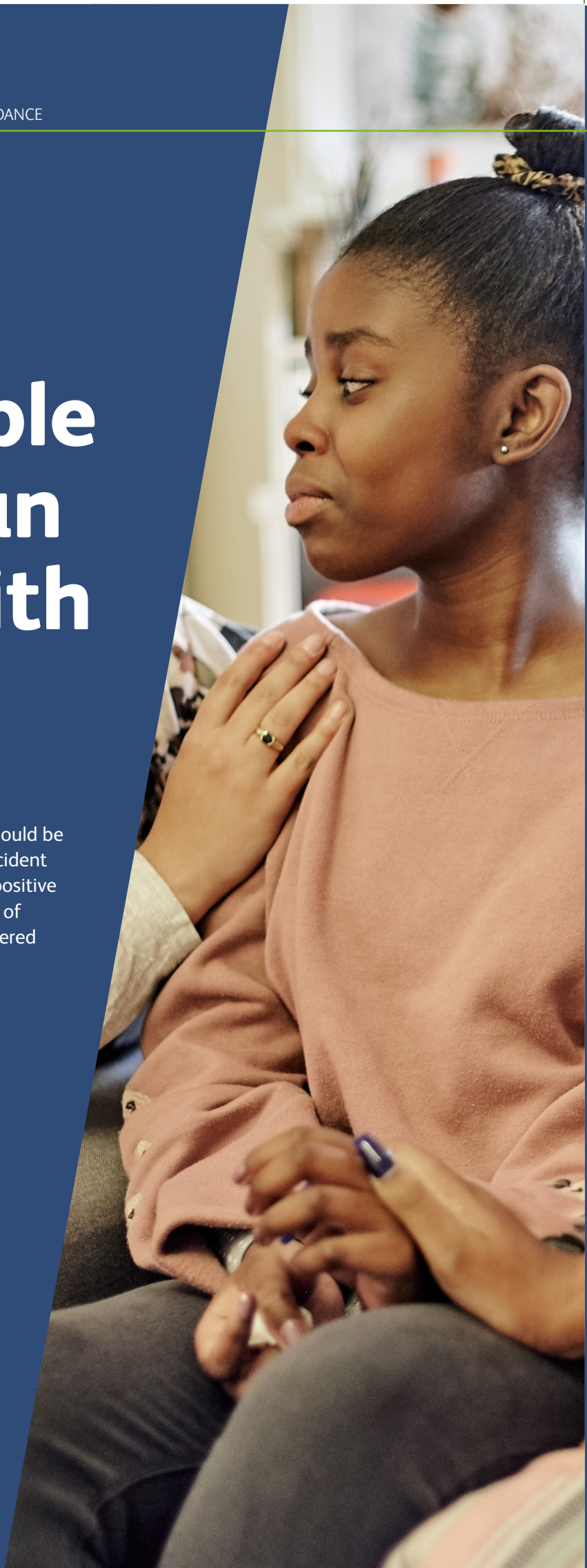


SECTION 6:

Supporting Young People Following an Incident with a Weapon

Any young people affected by the violent incident should be offered wellbeing support on the same day as the incident taking place by a member of staff that they have a positive relationship with e.g. Form tutor, pastoral lead, Head of Year or Youth Worker. Ongoing support should be offered in accordance with the needs of the young person.

See Section 13 (page 30) for further information on support services for young people.



SECTION 7:

Supporting Staff Following an Incident with a Weapon

CARDIFF COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDANCE: VIOLENCE AT WORK

The City and County of Cardiff considers that violence is not an acceptable part of any job nor is it part of the duties of any employee to accept violent behaviour. The Council is totally opposed to employees being subjected to violence as a result of employment with the Local Authority.



The policy can
be viewed [here](#).

WELLBEING SUPPORT

It is important to recognise that, following an incident of violence, staff may be affected and require a wellbeing plan.

In all instances of violence or the threat of violence to employees, the immediate line manager should talk to the employee, offering support and advice, unless he/she/they have been directly involved in the incident. If the Headteacher was involved, the Education Management Team should provide support and advice.

If appropriate, further counselling of employee(s) should be arranged, for example an external counsellor:

Employee Counselling Service (029 2023 5858)
or Victim Support Scheme (029 2057 8408).

PRACTICES CURRENTLY USED IN CARDIFF SCHOOLS

It is important to recognise the good wellbeing support already in place in schools in Cardiff. Some examples of current practice includes:

Supporting staff with an immediate debrief and emotional support- Staff are given a safe space to discuss their experience with a supervisor or colleague, which allows them to process their emotions and receive reassurance. This person- centred approach can be continued with regular supervisions for the staff member to reflect on the situation, discuss strategies, and receive constructive feedback from their supervisor. The schools Educational Psychologist can provide support and supervision for staff

Peer discussions - can be encouraged to share experiences, receive support from colleagues, and learn from one another.

Adjusting schedules - if needed to allow recovery time and ensuring staff wellbeing.

Providing additional training and developmental opportunities - should be discussed with the member of staff and/ or staff team regarding de-escalation techniques, trauma-informed care, or conflict resolution to equip staff with the skills to handle similar situations in the future.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Employee Assistance Programme – Vivup

Speak in confidence to fully qualified counsellors and support specialists 24/7, 365 days a year to discuss any emotional, personal or work-related issues.

Telephone: 0800 023 9387

Website: www.vivup.yourcareep.co.uk

Employee Counselling Service (ECS)

The Employee Counselling Service offers free and confidential counselling to anyone who is employed by the Cardiff Council.

Telephone: 029 2078 8500

Website:

<https://cityofcardiffcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/EmployeeCounsellingService>

Education Support Partnership

Advice, support and Counselling available to teachers and other employees in Education services. Operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Telephone: 0800 056 2561

Website: www.educationsupport.org.uk

NHS Direct Wales

Health advice 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Telephone: 0845 4647

Website: <http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/>

SECTION 8:

Recording Incidents

WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHO, WHY AND HOW

Once Toolkit A & B are completed, ensure that both are uploaded to MyConcern and are recorded on the Local Authority's Professional Portal via [Logon](#).

It is important to test the accuracy (provenance) of the information.

If a child tells a teacher that another pupil has a weapon, it's useful information but further questions are needed to ascertain:

- ▶ How they know this;
- ▶ Where did they see the weapon;
- ▶ Why have they brought it into school;
- ▶ How did they find out that they had the weapon;

This makes the information more valuable and will lead to a greater confidence in dealing with the event. It is also beneficial to record the discussion with the young people reporting the information in the child's voice.

Where a member of staff suspects a child has possession of a weapon in school it is equally important to record the same information. If and when the action is questioned the members of staff and the school are confident that their decision making was structured and informed.

All incidents, whether a weapon was suspected or found that have resulted in a search must be recorded on the Local Authority Professional Portal via [Logon](#) and saved on MyConcern. If support is needed, please email WISESIRM@cardiff.gov.uk.

A member of staff can submit a school's ALERT VAW report form to the Health & Safety Team within 48 hours of the incident taking place if they felt threatened during the incident.

Fig A. ▼

Suggested format for information collection

ADVOKATE – is a useful acronym to use and is used by the police when taking statements from witnesses.

AMOUNT

Amount of time the observation took place and when was the weapon seen.

DISTANCE

How far away were you when you saw the weapon?

VISIBILITY

Amount of time the observation took place and when was the weapon seen

OBSTRUCTIONS

Was the weapon seen clearly, were there any other items or people in the way.

KNOWN

Is the young person with the weapon known to them, and if so how?

ANY REASONS

What is the reason for disclosing this information? Why do they know the young person has a weapon?

TIME-LAPSE

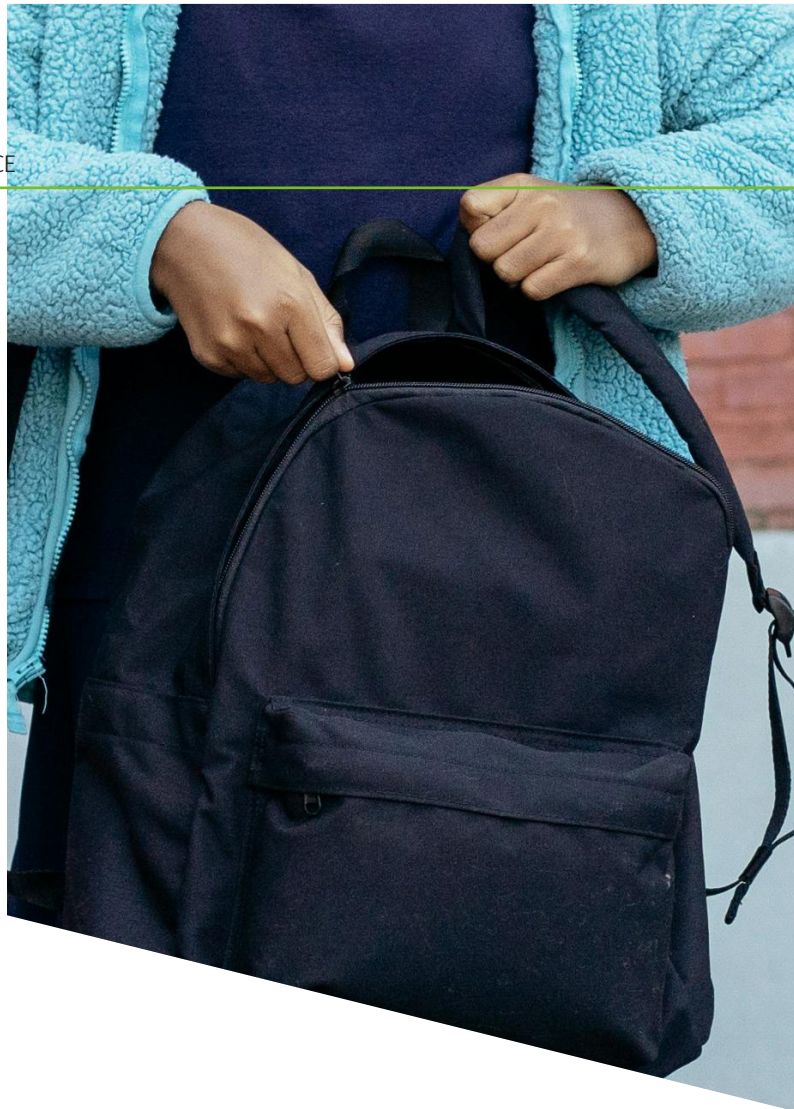
How much time has passed between the sighting and the reporting?

ERRORS

Are there any obvious errors in the statement?
e.g. Child A is named but staff know that Child A is not on site or the description is not accurate.

SECTION 9:

Safe Searching of Young People



There are different reasons why education settings may need to search a young person such as:

- ▶ Searching based on specific intelligence
- ▶ An agreement that a young person is searched daily as part of a safety plan.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN PRIOR AND DURING SEARCH

Two Staff Members

- ▶ There should always be two staff members present during a search. Where possible, staff members of the same sex as the young person to undertake searches. One person designated to search and the other person to be the witness
- ▶ The witness should engage the young person in conversation, watch for any escalation of behaviour and act as a Safety Officer.

Safe Space

- ▶ Searches should be conducted in a safe space, away from other young people. It should be explained to the young person that this is for their safety and the safety of others.

Safety Equipment

- ▶ The member of staff conducting the search is required to wear slash-proof gloves to protect themselves.

Head coverings

- ▶ Young people wearing head coverings **should not** be asked to remove them. They may be asked to show any safety fastenings if it is appropriate.

Communication

- ▶ Conversations between young people and staff should always remain professional.
- ▶ It is important for young people to clearly understand the reasons for a search and staff to be open and honest about their intentions of searching, as well as how the search will be conducted.
- ▶ It is important that all staff members are using consistent language and reasoning when searching young people. **At the end of this guidance document, there are scripts to support conversations with young people. See toolkit C (page 42).**

Search wands

- ▶ Search wands are recommended as a good technique to use when conducting a safe search of young people where there are clear and established suspicions of a weapon. Search wands can act as a useful deterrent when young people understand that they are being used in the school and educational setting.
- ▶ There is a risk assessment to support staff using a search wand at work – they can contact their schools allocated H&S Officer for advice, support and guidance on this work activity.
- ▶ Most operate by emitting a sound when they detect metal. Some can be used on silent and will vibrate rather than making a sound.
- ▶ The wands are a good means of confirming suspicions, and they do so in a manner that avoids physical contact between the designated member of staff and pupil. They will not however detect improvised weapons, such as those made from plastic or glass.
- ▶ It is recommended to use an approach that doesn't invite any confrontation such as a 'Fighting Arc'. **See Figure C.**
- ▶ The designated searcher should consider the following guidance as it gives a structured, systemic approach to searching: Imagine the body split into 5 areas (see figure D). It may help the designated searcher to follow an order when searching, starting at the head and going anti-clockwise around the body.



Fig B. ▲
Search Wand



Fig C. ▲
Illustration of Fighting Arc



Fig D. ▲
Sections of the body to search in order

SECTION 10:

Examples of Weapons

It is illegal to carry a knife in public without good reason. Many of the weapons illustrated below are illegal to possess in England and Wales in a public place. However, this is not a complete list.



Cyclone or spiral knife

A blade with a handle, a sharp point at the end and one or more cutting edges that each form a helix.



Push Dagger

A knife where the handle fits within a clenched fist and the blade comes out from between two fingers.



Belt Buckle Knife

A buckle which incorporates or conceals a knife.



Machetes

A long, broad-bladed knife typically 50 to 66 centimetres in length and usually under 3 millimetres thick.



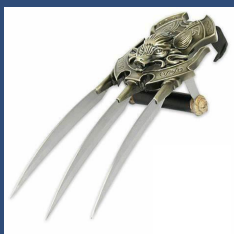
Zombie Knives

A knife with a cutting edge, a serrated edge and images or words suggested it is used for violence. All elements need to be present.



Butterfly knife or 'Balisong'

A blade enclosed by its handle. Designed to split down the middle to reveal the blade without using a spring or other mechanical means.



Hand claw

A band of metal or other hard material from which a number of sharp spikes protrude, and work around the hand.



Knuckleduster

A band of metal or other hard material worn on one or more fingers. Designed to cause injury, and any weapon incorporating a knuckleduster.



Air Weapons

A gun from which a projectile is propelled by compressed air. This includes BB guns, AirSoft guns and pellet guns.



Flick knife, Gravity knife, 'switch-blade' or 'automatic knife'

A knife that opens automatically from a closed position or partially opened position, to a fully opened position by any means of manual pressure that it applied to a button, spring or other device which is contained either within the knife or is attached to the knife.



Adapted weapons

An adapted weapon is an object that has been modified to cause injury to a person e.g. a sharpened screwdriver, scissors, broken bottle.



Curved knives/swords

A curved blade of 50 centimetres or over, based on the straight-line distance from the top of the handle to the tip of the blade.



Improvised Weapon

An improvised weapon is an object that was not designed to be used as a weapon but can be put to that use e.g. a baseball bat, screwdriver, hammer etc.

SECTION 11:

Safe Handling of Bladed Weapons

This section provides guidance for the safe handling of weapons, specifically bladed weapons.

The Police must be called to remove weapons from the education setting.

Where possible use gloves that are slash proof to handle weapons. In all cases be aware of the blade, but particularly spring loaded and butterfly knives as they can cut fingers when opening, especially if you are unfamiliar with the mechanisms.

Knife tubes are considered one of the safest ways to sort a bladed weapon (see Fig. E) and they come in various sizes. The advice is for the education settings to use the tube and obtain a like-for-like replacement when the Police remove the weapon from the education setting.

In the absence of knife tubes use either cardboard, bubble wrap or newspaper to cover the blade prior to securing the weapon in school (see Fig. F,G,& H).



Fig E. ▲
Knife Tubes



Fig F. ▲
Bubble wrap - Wrap the blade and tape tightly



Fig G. ▲
Newspaper - Wrap the blade and tape tightly



Fig H. ▲
Cardboard - Wrap the blade and tape tightly

SECTION 12:

Legal Guidance

There are a few examples of where an immediate police response is required by dialling 999. This is where a young person has a weapon and there is;

- ▶ A danger to life
- ▶ Use of immediate or the threat of immediate use of violence
- ▶ Serious injury caused to a person
- ▶ Serious damage to property.

There are a number of pieces of legislation that cover the possession of, the use and the threat of the use of weapons in public spaces and schools. This guide will cover definitions and how they would apply, depending on circumstances.

It will go some way to explain the Criminal Justice process and how this will affect the young person. The aim is not to criminalise but it is to ensure that the young person is subject to appropriate interventions (see Section 13).

In the event of a weapons-related incident, headteachers should refer to the Welsh Government's Exclusions Guidance to determine the appropriate response. Where immediate exclusion is not deemed appropriate or necessary, the headteacher may authorise a fixed-term leave of absence of up to five school days. This authorised absence must be clearly recorded using the appropriate attendance code and must not be classified as an exclusion

on disciplinary grounds.

This approach is lawful under current Welsh Government guidance, which permits headteachers to authorise absence in exceptional circumstances, including safeguarding concerns. During this period, arrangements must be made to ensure the learner continues to access full-time education off-site. These interim measures will remain in place until the Incident Review Meeting (IRM) has taken place and a formal decision is made regarding the learner's ongoing placement.

LEGAL GUIDANCE

Section 1(4) of the Section Prevention of Crime Act 1953, defines an offensive weapon as:

"Any Article made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him or by some other person".

Section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988

Prohibits having with you, in a public place any article that has a blade or is sharply pointed. Folding pocket knives with a blade less than 3 inches (7.62cm) are exempt.

Section 139A(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988

Any person who has an article to which section 139 of this act applies with them on school premises is guilty of an offence.

KEY TERMS

Blade/Sharply pointed article

Case law shows that the sharpness of the blade is not critical, so a blunt knife is still a bladed article. A sharply pointed article is one that has been sharpened so that its usual purpose has changed e.g. a sharpened screw driver.

Offensive weapon

Any article (including knives and sharply pointed articles) made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person, or intended by the person having it with him for such use or by some other person.

School Premises

The Criminal Justice Act, section 139A(6) and section 139B, outlines that "school premises" means land used for the purpose of a school excluding any land occupied solely as a dwelling by a person employed at the school; and school has the meaning given by Section 4 of the Education Act 1996.

- ▶ The site is still school premises when the school is closed.
- ▶ Caretakers house on site would be land occupied solely as a dwelling.
- ▶ It does not include Further Education and Higher Education sites.

SECTION 13:

Support Services for Young People and Provisions.

**GWASANAETHAU
CYFIAWNDER IEUENCTID
CAERDYDD**

**CARDIFF
YOUTH JUSTICE
SERVICES**



YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICES – CROSSROADS PREVENTION PROGRAMME

Provide intervention and support for young people, aged 10-17, and their families. The aim of the Youth Justice Service is to prevent anti-social behaviour, offending and re-offending by young people aged 10-17.

Email: YJSAdmin@cardiff.gov.uk

Telephone: 029 2233 0355

Website: www.caerdydd.gov.uk



Referral form:
[Crossroads Referral Form](#)

CARDIFF YOUTH SERVICE

Young people, aged 11-25, can participate in a range of fun activities and educational programmes such as Virtual Reality (VR) Gangs and digital youth work.

Telephone: 02920 615260

Website:
www.cardiffyouthservices.wales

OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

Follow the [link](#) for a full list of support services available



SECTION 14:

Useful Links

LEGAL INFORMATION



[Legalisation about the possession of a weapon](#)



[Safe and effective intervention – use of reasonable force and searching for weapons \(Welsh Government\)](#)



[Crown Prosecution Service - Offensive Weapons, Knives, Bladed and Pointed Articles](#)

CARDIFF COUNCIL POLICIES



[Cardiff Council Mental Health Policy](#)



[Cardiff Council Keeping All School Staff Safe \(KASSS\)](#)

OTHER DOCUMENTS



[Welsh Government - Emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings](#)



[NEU Guidance](#)



SECTION 15: Case Studies

CASE STUDY 1 | INTELLIGENCE



SCENARIO

A pupil (Robyn) shows a member of teaching staff a social media post that their class mate (Keira) had posted that morning. It was an image of a knife with the caption 'Zoe's gonna get it today'.

STEPS TAKEN

1

Two members of staff work in a pairs to locate Keira and bring her to an empty classroom. The member of staff asks another staff member to locate Zoe and ensure she is unharmed and in a safe space.

2

Two members of staff explain to Keira what they saw in the social media post and ask her if she is carrying a weapon on her person or in her bag. Keira explains that it was a joke and she wasn't serious about bringing a weapon to school.

3

The staff member explains that in order to keep everybody safe they must now conduct a search of Keira and her bag. Keira allows herself to be searched and no weapon is found in her bag or on her person.

4

A member of staff contacts Keira's mum to make her aware of the search that has been carried out and the social media post that had been seen by pupils.

5

The member of staff invites in the Police Youth Engagement Officer in to have a chat with Keira about the threat that she had posed online and how it can be perceived and lead to violence. Keira is required to meet once a day with her Pastoral Support Officer to discuss her feelings and look at coping strategies to deal with her anger.

6

Keira participates in the Fearless workshop delivered to her class to understand the consequences of carrying a knife.

Keira's form tutor uses the Not the One Campaign resources to follow on from the Fearless workshop.

7

A member of staff talks to Zoe to understand the reasons behind Keira's animosity towards her and identify if Zoe requires any further support. Staff also inform Zoe's parents of the social media post and the steps that they have taken to safeguard Zoe and the steps being taken to address Keira's behaviour.

CASE STUDY 2 | A WEAPON FOUND IN SCHOOL

SCENARIO

A 14-year-old pupil (Harley) shows his classmate (Brogan) a zombie knife that he bought off the internet by taking it out of his bag and waving it around in the school toilets. An 11-year old pupil (Finley) witnesses this and goes straight to tell the first teacher he comes across.



STEPS TAKEN

1

The member of staff reassures Finley that they will immediately address the situation and calls another teacher for support. They both enter the school toilets and asks Harley to place the knife on the floor and step away from it.

2

Harley is escorted to the school office whilst another teacher prevents anymore pupils from entering the toilets.

3

The Police are contacted and asked to collect the weapon and speak to Harley.

4

Harley's parents are called and asked to attend the school.

5

Harley and Brogan spoken to by pastoral staff to make an accurate record of what has taken place and identify why Harley brought this weapon into school.

Whilst awaiting the arrival of South Wales Police, Harley and his bag are searched to confirm that he is not in possession of any other weapons.

6

An Incident Review Meeting is planned for 5 days later to bring together Harley and the relevant parties to discuss a safety plan for Harley and his future education.

7

Harley is referred to the Crossroads Service within the Youth Justice Service Team as a preventative intervention.

Brogan and Finley are spoken to by pastoral staff and offered further wellbeing support because of the incident they witnessed.



CASE STUDY 3 WEAPON IS USED IN SCHOOL

SCENARIO

15 year old Charlie threatens their teacher with a Stanley knife during a maths lesson at school. They have purposely produced the blade and waved it at the teacher after becoming aggravated by the requests to stop throwing pens at another pupil. Several pupils take out their mobile phones and begin to film the incident. Charlie notices and runs out of the classroom, still holding the Stanley knife, and out of sight.

STEPS TAKEN

1 The maths teacher asks all of the pupils to remain seated, to stop filming, and stay in the classroom whilst they go for help.

The teacher alerts the office and Senior Leadership Team.

2

Senior Leadership Team instruct a full lockdown following the setting's 'Emergency Response Plan' until Charlie is located and the weapon is recovered.

3

South Wales Police are called and arrive at the school quickly.

4

Charlie is located behind the school barn visibly upset and shaking.

5

South Wales Police Officer's arrest Charlie and escort him off the school site.

6

An ALERT VAW report form is completed and sent to the Health & Safety Team.

Charlie's parents are contacted to meet them at the Police station.

Staff sensitively support the pupils that witnessed the incident and record what they saw.

7

The maths teacher is offered further support from Senior Leadership Team and access the counselling support service the local authority offers.

Charlie is referred to the Youth Justice Service.

Wellbeing support is offered to the pupils who were present in the class.

The Police Youth Engagement Officer comes into class and talks to the pupils about the consequences of filming violent incidents and of sharing them online.

CASE STUDY 4 | A THREAT OF A WEAPON IN AN EDUCATION SETTING

SCENARIO

17 Year old Dexter has turned up to the setting to confront a member of staff. He is outside trying to gain access. Dexter is being very aggressive and using verbally abusive language with threats of violence and harm towards the staff member.



STEPS TAKEN

1

A member of staff prevents Dexter from entering the building by closing and locking the door.

All young people are asked to move away from windows.

The threatened staff member moves to a place of safety.

2

A member of staff speaks to Dexter through the door and asked him to stop attacking the door so the matter can be discussed calmly. If not, the Police will be called.

3

Dexter continues making threats toward the member of staff and being increasingly aggressive. The Police are called and staff initiate a lockdown of the building.

5

Police arrive and arrest Dexter for damaging the property and threatening behaviour.

All young person's parents are contacted and arrangements are made for them to be collected.

4

Dexter pick up a large brick and starts smashing the windows.

All members of staff and young people remain inside the building following the lockdown procedure.

6

The Police collect witness statements.

Wellbeing support is offered to all staff and young people who witnessed the incident.

7

Provision is temporarily closed to the public for damage repairs.

An IRM meeting is held by senior members of staff to review the incident, identify training and inform future processes.

Dexter is referred to the Youth Justice Services by South Wales Police.

A restorative meeting is planned between Dexter and the threatened member of staff.

CASE STUDY 5 A WEAPON IS SIGHTED IN AN EDUCATION SETTING

SCENARIO

Ellie has turned up for a session at the education setting. A member of staff has seen Ellie outside the building talking with other young people. Ellie has pulled out a flick knife and swung it towards another young person in the group. The group start laughing until they realised that the member of staff has witnessed this. They disperse and Ellie puts the knife in her pocket and enters the setting.



STEPS TAKEN

- 1 The member of staff asks a colleague for assistance and approaches Ellie in a calm and reassuring manner. They ask her to follow them to an empty and secure room. They explain that they believe Ellie is in possession of a knife and asks Ellie to hand over the knife to keep everyone safe.
- 2 Ellie refuses and says that she needs it for protection when travelling between the setting and home.
- 3 Staff explain the consequences of being caught with a knife in public and that Ellie is at risk of being arrested. Staff ask again for her to hand over the knife.
- 4 Ellie hands over the knife and starts to cry. Staff support Ellie to explain her fears. When she is calm, staff explain that they still need to conduct a search of Ellie to keep everybody safe.
- 5 Staff use a search wand to ensure no other weapons are present on Ellie or her person. No other weapons were found.
- 6 Ellie's parents are contacted to collect her. A MARF is completed by staff immediately. Staff place the weapon in a knife tube and store it in a lockable safe. The Police are contacted to collect the weapon. Staff complete all necessary recording toolkits and schedule an IRM meeting with all relevant professionals.
- 7 Ellie does not attend the provision again until an Incident Review Meeting has taken place. Staff make wellbeing checks with Ellie daily via phone calls. The setting offers a knife crime awareness workshop through a trusted provider to all young people who attend the setting.

TOOLKIT A:

Recording Incidents

- ▶ Use this form when recording an incident of possession of a weapon and when a search has taken place.
- ▶ Upon completion, the forms should be completed on the Local Authority's Professional Portal via [Logon](#) and uploaded to MyConcern. If any support is needed, please email WISESIRM@cardiff.gov.uk.

Details of Person Completing Form

Name	<input type="text"/>	Job Role	<input type="text"/>
------	----------------------	----------	----------------------

Incident Details

Name of Educational Setting	<input type="text"/>	Date of Incident	<input type="text"/>
Location of Incident	<input type="text"/>	Time of Incident	<input type="text"/>

Origin of Intelligence

Information Received from	<input type="text"/>		
Reporting date	<input type="text"/>	Reporting Time	<input type="text"/>
Where has the information regarding the weapon come from? (Use the ADVOKATE acronym to record where the information came from e.g. social media, parents etc. Consider the reliability of the information source.)	<input type="text"/>		

Witness Details

Were there any witnesses?	Yes	No	Do they have material evidence? E.g. photo or footage on mobile.	Yes	No
Details of Material Evidence	<input type="text"/>				
Witness name(s) & Year Group(s)	<input type="text"/>				

INCIDENT SUMMARY

Name		Date of Birth		Year group	
Current Support Services Involved With Young Person e.g. Children’s Services, YJS, Youth Services, Educational Psychology					
Details of Additional Learning Needs e.g. Primary/Secondary Needs, Neurodevelopment, Pathway Referral					
Was a IDP in Place at the Time of Incident?	YES	NO	IDP Start Date		
Was a PSP in Place At Time of Incident?	YES	NO	Amount of Hours		
Parties Present and Involved in the Incident					
Details of the Incident (Continue on additional pages if required)	WHAT happened? WHERE did the incident take place? WHEN did the incident happen? WHO was involved? WHY did it happen? HOW did it happen?				

SEARCH SUMMARY

Did Consent for a Search Take Place?	YES	NO	If no, please proceed to Statements.		
Was the Young Person Informed of the Reasons for the Search?	YES	NO	Location of Search		
Names and Role of Staff Members Present at Search					
Was a Weapon Found?	YES	NO	Type of Weapon		
Time & Date Weapon was Collected			Parents Informed	YES	NO

Continue ▶

STATEMENTS

Staff Statement

(Continue on additional pages if required)

What happened? How did you feel during the incident?
How do you feel following the incident?

Young Person Statement

(Continue on additional pages if required)

What happened? How did you feel during the incident?
How do you feel following the incident?

TOOLKIT B:

Incident Review Meetings

- ▶ This form should be used by the lead during an Incident Review Meeting.
- ▶ Upon completion, the forms should be completed on the Local Authority's Professional Portal via [Logon](#) and uploaded to MyConcern. If any support is needed, please email WISESIRM@cardiff.gov.uk

Attendees

Present	Not Present

Details of the Incident

<p>What happened?</p> <p>Who were the witnesses?</p> <p>Was a search Conducted?</p> <p>Reasons it happened?</p> <p>What has happened to the young person?</p>	<p>It's my job as a facilitator to explore what happened and as a group we can decide what we need to move forward. Time-sharing is a priority for me, and I will be working to ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak.</p>
--	---

Actions/Next Steps - How can the young person remain in school?

How can staff feel safe?

Does there need to be a restorative meeting? Does there need to be bag searches? Does there need to be wellbeing check-ins?

How can the young person feel safe?

Does there need to be a restorative meeting? Does there need to be wellbeing check-ins? What additional support could be given?

How can the school community feel safe?

Does there need to be a restorative meeting? Does there need to be bag searches? Do further support services need to be involved? What additional support could be given?

Safety Plan

Does a safety plan need to be written? When can the young person return to school?

TOOLKIT C:

Example Scripts for a Search



NO WEAPON IS FOUND

Staff A: Thank you for coming in to the (insert safe location). How are you doing?

Child: What is this about?

Staff A: We have received information that you may have something in school with you. This means that we need to conduct a search. This is to keep everyone safe.

Child: I haven't got anything.

Staff A: Ok, I believe you. We just need to make sure everyone in school is kept safe. (Staff member B) is here with me to make sure this is done properly.

Staff B: Are you happy for us to search your bag?

Child: Okay

Staff B: Could you please empty your pockets and open your backpack for us?

(Staff A puts on gloves and gently searches through the items. Nothing suspicious is found)

Staff B: Thank you. We haven't found anything in your bag. We are just going to use a search wand to check there is nothing in your clothing.

(Staff A using the search wand to go over the Child. Nothing found)

Staff B: All clear, thank you. You are free to go back to class. I will take you back to class.

WEAPON IS FOUND

Staff A: Thank you for coming in to the (insert safe location). I am really glad you made a positive choice.

Child: What is this about?

Staff A: We have received information that you may have something in school with you.

This means that we need to conduct a search. This is to keep everyone safe.

Child: I haven't got anything.

Staff A: Ok, I believe you. We just need to make sure everyone in school is kept safe. (Staff member B) is here with me to make sure this is done properly.

Staff B: Are you happy for us to search your bag?

Child: You won't find anything.

Staff B: I understand. I will need to search your bag to keep everyone safe.

Child: Ok.

Staff A: Could you please empty your pockets and open your backpack for us?

(Staff A puts on gloves and gently searches through the items. A weapon is found)

Staff B: Thank you for letting us search your bag. We have found something in your bag. I need to check that there is nothing in your clothing.

(Staff A using the search wand to go over the Child. Nothing found)

Staff B: I need to confiscate this weapon because it is illegal to possess. I am glad that you don't any other weapons with you.

(Staff to take statement from child to be added to recording toolkit A. Offer young people wellbeing support in school. Staff to be offered wellbeing support.)

Acknowledgements

Cardiff Council would like to give thanks to the following for helping to shape the development of the Weapons in Schools & Educational Settings Guidance:

The Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit

Headteachers from across Cardiff

School Governors

Trade Unions

Cardiff Youth Council

Community Safety Team

Cardiff Youth Service

Cardiff Youth Justice Service

Education Directorate

South Wales Police

Children's Services

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