

Knives and Bladed Articles on School Premises

To be read in conjunction with the Beechwood Critical Incident Protocols and the Joint Health and Safety policy.

Beechwood School maintains a zero-tolerance approach to knives, bladed articles, or any item deemed capable of causing harm being brought onto the school site.

Prevention through education is key and awareness raising is part of the PSHCE curriculum and the Character Curriculum. The school also welcomes visitors including Thames Valley Police to support our young people.

Any student, visitor, or member of staff found in possession of such an item will be managed in line with safeguarding, behaviour, and health and safety procedures, and the police may be contacted where appropriate.

If a knife or suspected weapon is found, staff must not attempt to handle or remove the item unless there is an immediate risk to life. Staff should immediately inform the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), secure the area, supervise students calmly, and follow the school's emergency response procedures.

In the event of a direct threat or concern for immediate safety, staff should prioritise safeguarding students by initiating shelter in or evacuation procedures. Emergency Services must be contacted.

Roles and expectations for staff include maintaining calm, avoiding confrontation unless necessary to protect life, ensuring students are accounted for, and reporting all concerns immediately.

Following any incident involving a weapon, the school will conduct a full review of procedures, risk assessments, communication systems, staff training, and safeguarding arrangements to identify improvements and implement any necessary changes to strengthen site safety and emergency preparedness.

Staff Protocol: Discovery of a Knife or Threat Involving a Weapon

1. Immediate Assessment

- Remain calm and assess the level of immediate risk.
- Do not panic, raise your voice, or create alarm amongst students.
- Prioritise the safety of students, staff, and visitors at all times.

2. If a Knife or Weapon Is Found (No Immediate Threat)

- Do not touch, move, or attempt to secure the item unless absolutely necessary to prevent immediate harm.
- Keep students and others away from the area.

- Inform the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.
- A senior leader will assess whether police involvement is required.
- The area should remain supervised and secured until the item is safely removed.
- Inform Pinnacle.
- Record the incident in accordance with safeguarding and health and safety procedures.
- Inform LGB and Trust

3. If a Student Is Suspected to Be Carrying a Weapon

- Do not attempt to physically search or restrain the student unless there is an immediate threat to life.
- Send for SLT/DSL support immediately.
- Use calm, non-confrontational language.
- Avoid isolating yourself with the student where possible.
- Ask the student to wait in a safe, separate environment.
- Sustain visual contact at all times.
- Follow the school's behaviour, safeguarding, and searching procedures.
- Police should be contacted where appropriate.

4. If There Is an Immediate Threat or Violent Incident

- Activate the school's emergency response procedures (shelter in or evacuation) as directed by SLT.
- Call 999 immediately if there is a risk of serious harm.
- Staff should:
 - Move students to the nearest place of safety.
 - Lock or barricade doors if instructed during shelter in.
 - Keep students quiet, calm, and away from windows or doors.
 - Account for all students where possible.
 - Await instructions from SLT or emergency services.
- Staff must not intervene physically unless necessary to protect life and only if safe to do so.

5. Communication During an Incident

- SLT will coordinate communication with:
 - Emergency services
 - Staff
 - Pinnacle
 - Parents/carers
 - Governors/trust leaders where appropriate
- Staff should not share unverified information or post information on social media.

6. After the Incident

- All staff involved must provide a written factual account as soon as practicable.
- The DSL and SLT will review safeguarding concerns and provide support for affected pupils and staff.
- Appropriate sanctions, referrals, and risk assessments will be completed.
- Information to be shared with Pinnacle.
- The school will review procedures, training needs, and site security following any incident involving a weapon.
- Lessons learned and any procedural changes will be communicated to staff promptly and also shared with Pinnacle.
- Ensure LGB and Trust are aware.
- Support offered for those members of the community impacted.
- Consideration of what needs to be communicated with the local authority, wider community, parents and carers.

7. Staff Expectations

All staff are expected to:

- Follow safeguarding and emergency procedures at all times.
- Remain calm and professional.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of students and colleagues.
- Attend relevant safeguarding, critical incident, and health and safety training.