

# THE JUDD SCHOOL FIREARMS POLICY

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Policy dated: April 2017

Review date: April 2020

The Judd School follows the guidelines as set out in the KCC policy set out below. (*See KELSI - Firearms and Offensive Weapons*).

## **Policy on Firearms and Other Offensive Weapons in Schools and Other Educational Establishments**

1. The safety of pupils, students, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and visitors who may be involved with educational establishments on a day to day or less regular basis is of paramount concern, and must be protected through minimisation of risk of harm. Although Governing Bodies of schools are required to report annually<sup>1</sup> to parents the arrangements made for the security of the pupils and the staff at the school and on the school premises, the LEA believes that these arrangements should be reinforced by limiting unnecessary risks or accidents which may arise from firearms or other offensive weapons being brought on to or kept at school sites.
2. Following important studies, including that of the Working Group on School Security and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust report on Personal Safety and Violence in Schools, this policy on firearms and offensive weapons in schools and other educational establishments is intended to protect the health and safety of all.

**The County Council does not permit any firearms or other offensive weapons to be brought on to or kept on any school site or other educational establishment.**

3. This policy fits well with existing legislation. By the Offensive Weapons Act 1996, a person who without proof of good reason or lawful authority has an article with blade or point, or an 'offensive weapon', on school premises is guilty of an offence. It is a particular defence to prove that the article or weapon was needed for use at work, for educational purposes, for religious reasons or as part of any national costume. Imprisonment or a fine (or both) follow conviction.
4. A constable may enter and search School premises on reasonable grounds for believing that an offence has been or is being committed. If he does so, and reasonably suspects that he has discovered an article or weapon of the kind described, he may seize and retain it. He may use reasonable force, if necessary, to gain entry to the premises.

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<sup>1</sup> See paragraphs 10 and 11 below

## Definitions

5. "Firearm" is to be interpreted as any lethal barrelled weapon that can (or can be converted to) fire a shot, bullet or missile. "Schools and other educational establishments" is to be interpreted as all buildings and grounds at a school or educational establishment in Kent in receipt of County Council funding. "Offensive weapon" is to be interpreted as any device made, used or adapted to cause injury.

## Exceptions

6. In a very limited number of instances, there may be permitted exceptions to this general proscription. These are that firearms may be held:
- For the specific supervised safe use by a Cadet Force<sup>i</sup>
  - For safe use by school staff in sporting events (purpose-made firearms known as starting pistols)<sup>ii</sup>
  - For safe use in some scientific experiments<sup>iii</sup>

Existing guidance identified in each footnote should be referred to where such firearms are kept in order to ensure that they are legally held, used and kept safely.

Exceptions must be agreed in writing by the Strategic Director or his nominated representative, and are to be renewed annually.

7. Under no circumstances may offensive weapons be brought on to or kept at any school or educational establishment, with the limited exception of personal items of religious significance as defined and qualified in "The Religious and Cultural Needs of Minority Ethnic Pupils" circulated in May 1999 in relation to schools.

## Health and Safety at Work

8. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires KCC to ensure the provision and maintenance of a safe environment at work for employees and all other persons lawfully present on its premises, that is, in so far as is reasonably practicable to do so, without risk to health or safety, and with adequate regard to facilities and arrangements for their welfare. The Act itself would not, however, prohibit the safe storage of lawfully held firearms or other lawful offensive weapons upon KCC educational premises.
9. KCC's policy does prohibit such an arrangement, as indicated above. Consequently, in the event that any lawfully held firearms or other offensive weapons are currently stored upon KCC's education premises, their removal to another safe storage would need to be undertaken by their owner in consultation with the relevant authorities. Alternatively, disposal or destruction may be arranged in consultation with the Police Armourer at the County Police Headquarters.

Based on KCC letter dated 17 Jan 2000 – there is no more up to date advice listed by KCC.

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<sup>i</sup> As prescribed by the Ministry of Defence

<sup>ii</sup> As laid down in "Safe Practice in Physical Education"

<sup>iii</sup> Firearm (air gun) experiments in schools are regulated by Management of Health & Safety at Work which obliges education employers to perform a risk assessment in relation to these experiments. The process of risk assessment (what to do and how to do it safely) is set out in: (i) CLEAPPS Laboratory Handbook p.1218 and (ii) Association for Science Education's Safeguards in the School Laboratory Handbook (10th ed. 1996)