#### WEAPONS POLICY AND PRACTICE GUIDANCE

### Introduction

The purpose of this policy guidance is to state clearly that the deliberate and intentional bringing in and use of weapons on our school sites will not be tolerated. The use of such weapons on site would create unacceptable risks of bullying, injury and death and is extremely intimidating and frightening for pupils and adults alike.

If a pupil deliberately and intentionally brings a weapon onto the school site, the pupil will be placed on a fixed term exclusion and a disciplinary hearing will be carried out.

### Purpose and aim

Within Aspire North East Multi Academy Trust, the purpose of this policy guidance is to set out clearly the preventative actions in place to prevent the use of any weapons on our site. This policy guidance will outline the direct actions Aspire North East Multi Academy Trust will take, around the use of weapons on site, taking into account the full context around each and every incident.

Within Aspire North East Multi Academy Trust, we are committed to the safety and well-being of all of our pupils, staff and parents and will always take immediate action to reduce the risk of harm to any individual on our school sites.

Working with partnership agencies/signposting services

Multi agency working can consolidate in house procedures. By Aspire North East Multi Academy Trust accessing advice, support and guidance when required, effective decisions can be made in collaboration to improve outcomes for young people who may be at risk of harm. Seeking advice and guidance can act as a preventative measure so that the right course of action is taken at the earliest opportunity. The Trust promotes positive working relationships with front door services such as the police and social care, effective responses and partnership working achieves positive outcomes for all young people.

It is important that signposting is

#### Under what circumstances?

The same sex member of staff will search a pupil and there will also be a member of staff who will act as a witness - if possible, they will be the same sex as the pupil being searched.

The Trust can carry out a search of a pupil of the opposite sex and / or without a witness present, but only where it is reasonably believed that there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not conducted immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff.

# When can you search?

If Trust staff have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item. The law also says what must be done with prohibited items which are seized following a search.

The requirement that the searcher is the same sex as the pupil and that a witness is present will continue to apply in nearly all searches. Where it is practicable to summon a staff member of the same sex as the pupil and a witness then the member of staff wishing to conduct a search must do so.

## Authorising members of staff

The Headteacher will decide who to authorise to use these powers. The Trust is not required to provide authorisation in writing.

Staff, other than designated safeguarding leads (members of the Safeguarding Team), can refuse to undertake a search. The law states that headteachers may not require anyone other than a member of the school Safeguarding Team to undertake a search. (DfE (2

Staff can be authorised to search for some items but not others; for example, a member of staff could be authorised to search for stolen property, but not for weapons or knives.

#### Training for school staff

When designating a member of staff to undertake searches under these powers, the Headteacher will consider whether the member of staff requires any additional training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities.

## Establishing grounds for a search

School staff can only undertake a search without consent if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil may have in his or her possession a prohibited item. The member of staff will decide in each particular case what constitutes reasonable grounds for suspicion. For example, they may have heard other pupils talking about the item or they might notice a pupil behaving in a way that causes them to suspect that the pupil is concealing a prohibited item.

In the exceptional circumstances when it is necessary to conduct a search of a pupil of the opposite sex or in the absence of a witness, the member of staff conducting the search will

The powers allow school staff to search regardless of whether the pupil is found after the search to have that item. This includes circumstances where staff suspect a pupil of having items such as illegal drugs or stolen property which are later found not to be illegal or stolen.

School staff may wish to consider utilising CCTV footage in order to make a decision as to whether to conduct a search for an item.

Any weapons or items which are evidence of an offence will be passed to the police as soon as possible.

Taken from Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for Headteacher s, school staff and governing bodies, January 2018

## Taking action in the event of a weapon on site

If it has been identified that a weapon is on site and the appropriate searching and confiscating has occurred, then the school must begin a full and thorough investigation into what has occurred. If it can be proven that a weapon was brought on site with intent to harm then immediate action should occur including contacting the police and parents immediately. 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 should instigate its critical incident management protocols immediately inclusive of lock down procedures, secure and isolate the student and weapon if possible and again contact the police immediately.

If the context of the situation is not so easily identified then a full and thorough investigation is required

### Gathering the facts

In all circumstances, staff need to speak to all the pupils involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use