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COMMITTEE	<b>Education and Children's Services</b>
DATE	<b>14 September 2017</b>
REPORT TITLE	<b>Education and Children's Services Anti-Weapon / Knife Crime Policy</b>
REPORT NUMBER	<b>ECS/17/041</b>
DIRECTOR	<b>Gayle Gorman</b>
REPORT AUTHOR	<b>Catriona Walker</b>

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-**

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to implement the draft Anti-Weapon/Knife Crime Policy in Aberdeen City Council schools.

**2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) Approve the Anti-Weapon/Knife Crime Policy to be implemented immediately.

**3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

**3.1 Background**

Following the approval of the Anti-Weapon/Knife Crime Strategy at Committee on 17 November 2016 work has continued to successfully implement the recommendations of the Independent Review (Andrew Lowe).

Recommendation 5 from the review stated –

*Aberdeen City Council should work with Police Scotland to establish a clear and effective policy on management of offensive weapons in school with partners.*

The Anti-Weapon/Knife Crime Policy incorporates a further twelve recommendations from the Independent Review including Engagement with pupils and parents, Incident Notification & Recording, Pupil Searches and links to the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Collaboration with Police Scotland has ensured information on the current legal framework is reflected in the Policy along with clear guidance on searching and incident reporting. The Policy was also put out for consultation to internal colleagues within ECS, all Head Teachers, Northern Alliance and

Parent Council representatives. Feedback received has been used to update and improve the Policy.

### **3.2 Aims**

The Anti-Weapon/Knife Crime Policy aims

- To inform schools of expectations with regard to anti-weapon/knife crime
- To provide procedural and operational guidance to all Aberdeen City Council schools and communities with regard to weapon/knife crime
- To provide guidance on procedures with regard to the searching of pupil's personal belongings
- To outline links to Aberdeen City Council Anti-bullying Policy

### **3.3 Implications for Schools**

Schools will be required to

- Upskill staff in the requirements of the Anti- Weapon/Knife Policy for Aberdeen City Council
- Continue to work in partnership with Police Scotland
- Disseminate related materials to pupils, staff and parents
- Organise Pupil Forum discussions as stipulated in the Policy

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional financial implications associated with this Policy. All costs are being met from existing service budgets.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Children in Scotland Act places a duty on Local Authorities to protect children and young people. The Anti-Weapon/Knife Crime Policy will give direction to schools in sharing the main messages of weapon crime. The Policy outlines effective practice in safeguarding children and young people to ensure that the Council fully complies with legal duties.

## **6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

**6.1 Financial** – There are no financial risks associated with the policy or its implementation.

**6.2 Employee** – Not being able to safeguard children and young people can present a risk to the wellbeing of employees This Policy will provide employees with clarity on the authorities' expectations about what constitutes a weapon and how to report weapon incidents.. The Policy will help reduce the risk as the procedural steps and responsibilities are clear.

**6.3 Customer/ citizen** – The implementation of the Anti-Weapon/Knife Crime Policy will allow Aberdeen City Council to progress and embed the messages around weapons and knife crime and subsequently ensure the risk is low. It will allow continual collaborative working between Aberdeen City Council,

schools, parents and Police Scotland. The Policy and guidance will provide consistency across the Local Authority and proactive planning will enable swift and immediate response to schools and communities.

**6.4 Environmental** – There are no environmental risks identified with this policy.

**6.5 Technological** – The risks in terms of technology have been identified and the School Management Information Systems (SEEMIS) team provide schools/staff support in recording parent letter returns and the ECS Admin team support staff in accessing and completing incident 'Near Miss' reports.

**6.6 Legal** – Implementing this policy and reviewing it at relevant times will limit the risk of legal challenge. Adhering to this Policy will ensure that legal risks remain low.

**6.7 Reputational** – The Anti-Weapon/Knife Crime Policy requires a consistent and centralised approach to the education of weapons and the recording of weapon incidents. This will result in the information about weapon incidents across our service to be more accessible and visible. This is seen as a positive impact allowing Aberdeen City Council to work in close partnership with Police Scotland and in providing schools with immediate response and support to any weapon incident. Aberdeen City Council will continue to evaluate the provision and support provided by actions contained in the Anti-Weapon Policy. This will be reviewed at relevant times ensuring that mitigating circumstances relating to any incident regarding weapon/knife crime is reduced as far as possible.

## **7. IMPACT SECTION**

**7.1 Economy** – Children and young people who are educated on the risks of carrying a weapon and made aware of the consequences of weapon crime are less likely to commit an offence and more likely to contribute to the economy.

**7.2 People** – The Anti-Weapon/Knife Policy will enable schools across the city to effectively raise awareness of weapon/knife crime and educate young people on the consequences of carrying a weapon. In addition it will provide clarity to school staff on the protocol of:-

- Notifying and recording incidents relating to weapons/knives
- Pupil searches and confiscation of weapons/knives
- Anti- bullying recommendations

The Policy will be of interest to the public and will have a positive impact on Children and Young People through its implementation.

This work clearly aligns with the [Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26](#).

The Policy supports our Priority 'Children are Our Future' within the LOIP and works towards delivery of primary drivers –

***2. Children are safe and responsible – children and young people are safe from all forms of harm***

**3. Children are respected, included and achieving – children and young people are listened to, respected, valued and involved in the decision-making process**

An EHRIA has been completed for this Policy.

**7.3 Place** - The safety and wellbeing of all pupils, staff and visitors to a school is of paramount importance. Implementation of the Anti-Weapon/Knife Policy will help create a safe learning environment benefitting everyone and therefore contributing to a safer community and environment.

Within the LOIP the Policy will help deliver the primary drivers of our Priority 'Empowered, Resilient and Sustainable Communities'

**1. Safe and resilient communities - Aberdeen is a place where people are safe from harm.**

A fundamental sense of safety and wellbeing has the greatest impact on people's lives and builds community empowerment and resilience. Preventing crime and antisocial behaviour continues to be a priority for partnership working.

**7.4 Technology** – The reporting requirement linked to the Anti-Weapon/Knife Crime Policy for schools uses [The Zone Your HR] for 'near miss' reports and SEEMIS for the collation of parent letter returns, both are available to all Aberdeen City schools.

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 Independent Review of the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Bailey Gwynne at Cults Academy on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

<http://thezone/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=38886&sID=12724>

8.2 Education and Children's Services Anti-Bullying Policy

<http://thezone/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=41434&sID=8689>

**9. APPENDICES (if applicable)**

- Appendix 1 – Draft Anti-Weapon/Knife Crime Policy
- Appendix 2 - Review Recommendations

**10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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