



Weapons Policy

Approved by North East Futures UTC Date: June 2026
Local Governing Body

Last Reviewed on: June 2026

Next review By: June 2029

North East Futures UTC has been established to change the education, skills and employment paradigm in our IT and Healthcare Science sectors in the North East. It provides the opportunity for young people from all the communities in this region to benefit from its specialist provision. Local Governors and all the North East Futures staff are committed to a policy of equality and aim to ensure that all students, employees, job applicants, other members of the school community and visitors are treated fairly and with respect. We aim to give equal access to the high-quality educational opportunities we provide and to ensure that everyone feels that they are a valued member of the school community. We seek to create a safe and happy environment where all our students can flourish and where social and cultural diversity are celebrated.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to state clearly that the deliberate and intentional bringing in and use of weapons on our school site 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 students and adults alike.

Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly the preventative actions against the use of any weapons on our site. This policy will also show the direct actions the UTC will take around the use of weapons on site, taking into account the full context around each and every incident.

At NE Futures UTC, we are committed to the safety and well-being of all of our students, staff, parents, and visitors, and will always take immediate action to reduce the risk of harm to any individual on our school site.

What is a Weapon?

For the purpose of this Policy, a “weapon” is defined as:

- A firearm of any description, including starting pistols, air guns, and any type of replica or toy gun, pellet guns, or BB guns.
- Knives, including all variations of bladed objects (i.e., pocket knives, craft knives, scissors, etc.).
- Explosives, including fireworks, aerosol sprays, lighters, and matches.
- Laser pens or other objects, even if manufactured for a non-violent purpose, if they have a potentially violent use (i.e., the purpose of keeping or carrying the object is for use, or threat of use, as a weapon).
- Screwdrivers, hammers, chisels, bradawls, and any tool that could be offensively used.
- Razors, razor blades, or chains.
- Any item which is used as though it were a weapon, with the intention of wounding another person.

Preventative Strategies & Recognition

It is important for schools to develop appropriate strategies in order to prevent the issue of weapon misuse or any contextual issues around it, such as children carrying them to ‘feel safe’ from peers or gangs.

Recognition

Most importantly, the school recognizes that incidents where children bring weapons onto site may happen intentionally as well as unintentionally, even with the strictest of policies. In these cases, the

immediate actions taken by staff must be prompt and consistent. Therefore, ALL staff must know and understand this policy and the expectations of keeping children safe.

In any circumstance where this occurs, it is important that senior leaders take forward any learning from such incidents to improve policy, revise training, and improve practice.

Creating a Safeguarding Culture

In order for students and staff to feel safe, everyone must agree to and work within the UTC's ethos and culture of vigilance, positively contributing to the sharing of information where there may be risk.

By creating a strong culture of safeguarding within the UTC, all individuals accessing the site should feel safe to raise concerns and seek support, ensuring a seamless and consistent response to incidents. To maintain this environment, the whole workforce and all students should receive appropriate learning and training around expectations. This includes how to raise the alarm, procedures for lockdown, use of social media, and critical incident responses.

Effective Use of the Curriculum

NE Futures UTC has an effective curriculum in place via Personal Development to support students to understand the risks around the use of weapons, the legal implications of carrying weapons, and the UTC's response to such incidents.

A curriculum that allows strong discussion around the use of weapons may act preventatively to allow students to think twice about the consequences of carrying a weapon. It may also create opportunities for students to share useful intelligence around peer-on-peer abuse, gang-related behaviors, and contextual issues in the local area. Any such intelligence shared will be passed on to the appropriate front-door services, police, and social care.

Working with Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be made aware of the UTC's stringent policy around weapons via the website and are expected to support the decisions made by senior leaders in the event of an incident. Parents/carers should always be vigilant of the behaviors of their own children and seek support and intervention when necessary.

If parents/carers believe that their child may be carrying a weapon, they should inform the UTC and the police immediately to protect their child, other children, and adults. By sharing information, immediate intervention and a plan of support can be put in place before an incident occurs.

Working with Partnership Agencies & Signposting

Multi-agency working consolidates in-house procedures at the UTC. By accessing advice, support, and guidance when required, effective decisions can be made in collaboration to improve outcomes for children at risk of harm. Promoted working relationships with front-door services (such as the police and social care) ensure effective, collaborative responses.

It is equally important that signposting is available to students who may not feel confident raising an issue directly to staff or peers. In-school resources will be provided with support services on a wide range of issues so young people can seek their own solutions. External services or support programmes will also be brought in to talk to young people about specific issues in support of preventing peer-on-peer abuse.

Searching and Confiscation

Searching with Consent

School staff can search students for any item with their consent. Schools are not required to have formal written consent from the student for this sort of search—it is enough for the teacher to ask the student to turn out his or her pockets, or ask to look in the student's bag or locker, and for the student to agree.

NE Futures UTC will make it clear in the Behaviour for Learning Policy and in communications to parents and students what items are banned. If a member of staff suspects a student has a banned item, they can instruct the student to turn out their pockets or bag. If the student refuses, the teacher can apply an appropriate punishment as set out in the behavior policy.

Searching Without Consent

The Principal and staff authorized by them have a statutory power to search students or their possessions without consent where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student may have a prohibited item.

- What can be searched for? Knives or weapons, any article that staff reasonably suspects has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence/cause injury/damage property, and any item explicitly banned by the school rules.
- Who can search? Two experienced school staff with permission from the Principal.
- Under what circumstances? There must be a witness (also a staff member) and, if possible, they should be the same sex as the student being searched.

Exceptional Circumstances: A member of staff can carry out a search of a student of the opposite sex and/or without a witness present only where they reasonably believe that there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if they do not conduct the search immediately, and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff.

Authorising Members of Staff

The Principal will decide who to authorize to use these powers. There is no requirement to provide authorization in writing. Staff (other than security staff) can refuse to undertake a search. Staff can be authorized to search for some items but not others (e.g., authorized for stolen property, but not for weapons).

Establishing Grounds for a Search

Staff can only undertake a search without consent if they have reasonable grounds for suspicion. Staff must decide in each case what constitutes reasonable grounds (e.g., hearing students talking about an item, or noticing a student behaving in a way that suggests concealment). School staff may utilize recorded CCTV footage in order to help make this decision.

Confiscating Items

School staff can seize any prohibited item found as a result of a search. They can also seize any item they consider harmful or detrimental to UTC discipline. Any weapons or items which are evidence of an offense must be passed to the police as soon as possible.

(Guidance adapted from: Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for Principals, school staff and governing bodies, January 2018)

Taking Action in the Event of a Weapon on Site

If a weapon is identified on site and the appropriate searching/confiscating has occurred, the UTC will begin a full investigation.

- **Intent to Harm:** If it is proven that a weapon was brought on site with intent to harm, immediate action will occur: the police and parents will be contacted, and the student will be isolated from other students immediately.
- **Active Harm Caused:** If the weapon has been used to harm someone, the UTC will instigate its critical incident management protocols immediately (including lockdown procedures), secure and isolate the student and weapon if possible, and contact the police immediately.
- **Unclear Context:** If the context of the situation is not easily identified, a full and thorough investigation is required to establish the UTC's next course of action.

Gathering the Facts

In all circumstances, staff need to speak to all students involved separately and gain a statement of facts using consistent language and open questions. The best approach is to ask students to explain what happened in their own words, only interrupting to gain clarity using open questions (Where, When, Why, Who, What was seen/heard, Did anyone intervene?). A full and clear record of exactly what the student said must be recorded using their own language and stored using the CPOMS system.

Considering Intent

From the information gathered, leaders will consider intent. Did the student intend to bring a weapon onto the site to harm someone in a deliberate act, or did they bring it as a form of defense or for their own safety? Both situations are of equal concern, but a deliberate attempt at harm will result in different outcomes.

Deciding on the Next Course of Action

The course of action will be decided by the Principal with reference to the UTC's Behaviour Policy and Exclusions Policy.

Returning to School & Safety Planning

Safety planning is a positive way of supporting a child following an incident. Safety plans consider the behavior behind the use of a weapon, plan ways to manage identified risks/triggers, and help young people identify behaviors that leave them feeling anxious. These plans include parents and staff to help the student feel secure upon returning to the setting.

Review of Circumstances

Following any incident of harm, it is vital for the school to review the event and consider if anything could have been done differently.

Associated Documents

This policy and practice guidance is supported by the following key documents:

- Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for Principals, school staff and governing bodies (January 2018 / July 2024 updates)
- Farrer and Co: Peer on Peer Abuse Toolkit (2019)
- DFE: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

- The Offensive Weapons Act 2019
- The UTC's Child Protection Policy / Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- The UTC's Behaviour for Learning Policy

This policy will be reviewed earlier if necessary.

Version History

Date of review	Summary of Changes
June 2026	This policy and practice guidance is supported by the following key documents: • Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for Principals, school staff and governing bodies (January 2018 / July 2024 updates) • Farrer and Co: Peer on Peer Abuse Toolkit (2019) • DFE: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) • The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 • The UTC's Child Protection Policy / Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy • The UTC's Behaviour for Learning Policy