

## No knives at school – parent factsheet

Health and Safety Directorate



### There is no good reason to bring a knife to school.

NSW now has the toughest knife laws in Australia. As a parent, you need to be aware of these laws, as you can also be charged if you allow your child to carry a knife.

### No knives allowed at school under any circumstances

If a student has a knife at school the principal may call the police.

The student may be expelled or suspended immediately. Possessing a knife includes your child simply having one in their bag or locker. Having a knife for self-protection is also illegal. If you are concerned about your child's wellbeing or safety, contact the principal.

Tough penalties apply for children convicted of knife offences, including gaol sentences of up to 25 years if someone is injured with a knife during an assault.

**Every child has the right to feel safe and secure at school. There is no good reason for a child to ever have a knife at school.**

**If you want to talk about children and knives at school, please contact the principal.**

### What kind of knives are prohibited?

As school policy is designed to keep all students safe, no type of knife is allowed at school. That means no butter knives or fruit knives in lunchboxes, or knife tools for craft purposes.

Flick knives, ballistic knives, sheath knives, push daggers, trench knives, butterfly knives and star knives are all prohibited.

Your child cannot bring to school any item that can be used as a weapon (such as a chisel).

In lessons requiring the use of knives, for example cooking or trades, your child's teacher will supply and supervise the use of the tools.

There are some senior subjects, such as hospitality, where children may be required to have their own knives.

Your child's school will advise you about these courses and the procedures for carrying knives legally to and from school.

### The law makes parents responsible

You need to make certain your child is aware of the school's rules and the State laws about knives.

If you allow your child to carry or possess a knife at school or in a public place, you can be charged.

The police can search any child they suspect of having a knife. They can confiscate any dangerous object they might find during the search.

Your child must comply with such a police search, or they may be arrested and charged.

It is also illegal for anyone to sell a knife to anyone who is less than 16 years old

## BAN ON STUDENTS, STAFF AND VISITORS BRINGING KNIVES TO SCHOOLS

Dear parents and carers

The Department of Education has a paramount duty to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff in attendance at its schools. This is a duty that the Department and I as Principal of Fairfield West Public School take very seriously. You have a right to expect, when sending your children to school, that they will be safe.

We also have legal obligations under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety (so far as is reasonably practicable).

The Department already has a strict policy specifying no weapons being allowed at school. To date there has been a legal exemption for knives carried for religious purposes (including a kirpan carried by some Sikh students).

Following a recent incident, the Department has now implemented a temporary ban on students, staff and visitors carrying any form of knife into government schools (including those carried for religious purposes). This temporary ban is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff at all of our schools.

The Department is currently working with a range of community stakeholders including religious organisations to develop a new policy to enable students, where appropriate, to continue to express their faith, while still maintaining safety within the school context.

From Wednesday 19 May 2021, and until further notice, no students may carry a knife while at school, even those worn for genuine religious reasons. We request that parents and carers talk with their children to make sure they understand this change. Knives carried for religious purposes, including kirpans, will need to be kept at home for the foreseeable future.

We recognise this is a sensitive issue for many within the community and wish to assure you that the Department will be working urgently to find a solution which respects every student's faith alongside the safety of everyone in our school.

We ask all parents to support the school with these changes, parent information on knives in schools can be found on the No knives at school – parent factsheet. Parents may also find the information on the No knives at school – student factsheet useful in their discussions with their children.

If you have any question in regards to this information please ring the school on 9604 5568 to make a time to discuss.

  
Ms G Goldfinch  
Principal  
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