

SAFE EKC GROUP POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT:

EKC Group has a responsibility towards its staff, students and authorised visitors to ensure that all Colleges within the Group provide a safe, welcoming and unthreatening environment. EKC Group wishes to promote a culture where staff and students can work and study without fear of intimidation, harassment, threatening or violent behaviour, where all are able to operate in a safe environment characterised by mutual respect. In support of this ethos, EKC Group considers the following as 'prohibited items' and takes a zero tolerance approach to their possession and use:

- offensive weapons, implements or other materials that are carried with the intent to cause physical harm or to threaten and intimidate
- illegal drugs, alcohol and other noxious substances e.g. acid
- stolen goods
- pornographic or other offensive or illicit materials

Where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion that an individual is carrying prohibited items, EKC Group reserves the right to use powers designated under the Education Act 2011 to stop and search individuals without their consent and to seize any items where necessary.

Definitions

All EKC Group property whether owned or leased is covered under the Safe College policy. This includes the Colleges, all outreach sites and other sites where EKC Group activity takes place.

Authorised visitor refers to anyone who is not a member of the EKC Group community and who has a valid and appropriate reason for being on EKC Group property. This may include users of EKC Group's commercial offer, students and their parents, carers or partners, contractors, stakeholders etc.

Offensive weapon refers to any object which can be used to harm a person or property. This includes items which are deliberately made or adapted to be used as weapons with the intent to cause harm, to threaten or intimidate.

Illegal drugs refers to all drugs classified by the government under classes A to C and those under a temporary classification. N.B. The practice of sharing and selling illegal and prescription drugs is a criminal offence and appropriate action will be taken where necessary.

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PROCEDURES:

1. Legitimate Use

Given the nature of EKC Group's curriculum, staff and students own and use tools or equipment which could be used as an offensive weapon. Examples include chef's knives, scalpels and Stanley knives used in art and design, hand tools used in construction or motor vehicle studies. EKC Group acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that those items which belong to EKC Group or which it stores for students are kept secure and that proper procedures exist for issue and collection. When using such equipment or tools students should be under staff supervision and personal protective equipment deployed where necessary. Students who need tools or equipment for work outside of their programme of learning should procure a separate set for this purpose and retain them with their personal possessions.

Students have a responsibility to fully comply with procedures and instructions issued by staff. This includes following safety procedures, using tools and equipment appropriately at all times and not removing them from their designated area.

If students own tools or equipment which need to be carried away from their work area then they are expected to act responsibly by keeping such items secure in appropriate holders, not using them for any other activity and not allowing anyone else to take possession of them.

In accordance with guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, members of the Sikh faith may legitimately carry a Kirpan, a small ceremonial knife, as an article of faith.

2. Powers to stop and search students for prohibited items

Designated EKC Group staff have powers to stop and search students if there are reasonable grounds for suspicion that a student is carrying a prohibited item. Consent of the suspect is not required for this but the powers are subject to the following conditions.

- They are exercised on EKC Group's premises or elsewhere where the member of staff has lawful control of the student (i.e. during a field trip) Searches are authorised by the College Principal or a delegated representative, either generally or to deal with a specific incident
- The student can only be required to remove outer clothing i.e. clothing not worn next to the skin or immediately over underwear; the student may be required to remove any hat, gloves, scarf or shoes for inspection. Any removal of clothing will be undertaken by the suspect, not the person(s) undertaking the search. If a student refuses to cooperate with the search, EKC Group reserves the right to exclude them.
- At all times, two members of staff will be present during a search, one to conduct the search and one to witness it; the person conducting the search must be of the same sex as the student and wherever possible the member of staff who witnesses it will be the same sex as the suspect. Where the student is transgender or is transitioning to another gender, the sex of the member of staff conducting the search will be the same as the

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chosen gender of the student.

- Anything found which the member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect is a prohibited item may be seized but must be handed to the Police as soon as is reasonably practicable. If alcohol is found, the alcohol will be retained and destroyed if the student is under the age of 18. If they are over the age of 18, the alcohol will be confiscated and returned to the owner at an appropriate time. If noxious substances such as acid are found, the Police must be informed immediately.
- Staff exercising the power may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances. Where it is anticipated that force may be required the Police will be called if it is feasible to postpone the search until they arrive. Under no circumstances should staff put themselves at risk.
- If students abscond at any stage of the stop and search process, EKC Group reserves the right to exclude the student.

Where it is not practical or possible to conduct a search the Police should be called for assistance.

Responsibilities

EKC Group has clear student disciplinary procedures and students must be made aware of these during their induction. .

The procedure allows for proper investigation to take place in response to any incident so that the full facts can be established. Incidents involving threatened or actual aggression would normally result in any alleged aggressor being suspended.

The actual disciplinary penalty resulting from such incidents would depend on the specific circumstances. The matter would always be regarded as very serious and could result in exclusion, even if the person has no previous record of unacceptable behaviour.

EKC Group does not accept excuses of self protection for carrying offensive weapons and students or staff fearing aggression should bring the matter to the attention of an appropriate member of staff immediately. EKC Group would normally inform the Police of such incidents, certainly if the possession of offensive weapons were involved.

Individuals threatening or perpetrating aggressive acts may be persons with no authorised reason to be on EKC Group property and would always be asked to leave the property and not to return. In such cases, CCTV may be interrogated for supporting evidence. Each incident would be judged separately and the Police would be informed or called. The College Principal will also take action against individuals who come onto EKC Group property when they have no business to be there. A letter from the College Principal will be sent to such individuals prohibiting them from entering the site again, a breach of which would result in a criminal offence.

No student or member of staff is expected to put themselves at risk by dealing with aggressive individuals. The police would always be called should there be any such threat, actual or

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perceived.

EKC Group will provide training for those members of staff authorised to undertake searches. Screening, should it take place, will be out of view of anyone other than those people who have to be present and will be conducted with appropriate sensitivity to any cultural or religious issues which may arise. In the case of searches of vulnerable or disabled students, it may be necessary to have a Learning Support Practitioner or other support person present to ensure that the specific needs of the student are met.

The search will be managed by designated staff, who have delegated power from the College Principal to carry this out. Under no circumstances will staff other than those who are designated, carry out stop and search procedures.

EKC Group will ensure that the use of their statutory powers is appropriately recorded and monitored, with a report made to the Governing Body at least annually.

All incidents and occurrences will be properly documented with details of time, date, location, persons involved, witnesses, events and action taken. Copies of the report will be retained by designated staff and the Assistant Principal/College Business Manager will also receive a copy. It is the responsibility of the respective College Principal to ensure that students are made aware of this policy. It is the responsibility of HR and members of the senior management team to ensure that staff are aware of the policy and their responsibility under it to report any suspected or actual incident to the appropriate senior staff.

Associated policies and procedures

- Safeguarding and Preventing Terrorism and Extremism
- Health and Safety
- Data Protection
- CCTV
- Student Disciplinary
- Anti-harassment
- Student code of conduct (expected behaviours)

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