

OFFENSIVE WEAPONS POLICY



INTRODUCTION

Hartpury aims to provide a safe and secure environment where teaching and learning can take place safely and where students can study and work safely.

PURPOSE

Firearms, weapons, knives, fireworks, projectiles, projectile launch devices and any explosive devices are not permitted on campus.

Written permission is subject to the following conditions:

- That there is a genuine need for the item to be on campus
- That the person bringing the item onto campus is legally compliant with any appropriate legislative requirements
- That appropriate secure storage is available
- That written risk assessments have been drawn up and agreed by an appropriate staff member which should be a person who is aware of the necessity for the weapon to be brought on to campus.
- The risk assessments should be signed by the relevant staff member and the person bringing the weapon on to campus.

Failure to comply with all or any part of these conditions may result in the student being suspended or excluded in accordance with the appropriate policy. Only a member of the Senior Management Team can grant permission for an offensive weapon to be brought on to the Hartpury campus without the above conditions being met.

We do recognise that knives, scalpels, needles and other sharp objects are used across practical sessions for specific purposes and are always used under supervision of responsible, trained staff and are only permitted in controlled conditions.

SCOPE

Applies to all staff, students and visitors on campus. It also applies to any Hartpury organised activity outside of Hartpury campus.

OBJECTIVES

The protection of Hartpury campus users from the threat of violence and acts of aggression are imperative. This policy gives clear direction to all Campus users about when it is permitted to bring an offensive weapon on to Hartpury campus and what permissions and risk assessments are necessary if items considered offensive weapons in law, would be permitted and the consequences if those items are brought on to Campus unauthorised. Any breaches of this policy will be treated as a serious behaviour management matter and could result in exclusion.

DEFINITIONS

The legal definition of an offensive weapon as defined by the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 is "any article made or adapted for causing injury to the person or intended by the person having it with him/her for such use by him/her".

Offensive Weapons include any object manufactured, adapted or modified to cause injury or carried with the intention of or possibility of causing injury. It includes but is not limited to:

- A firearm of any description including starting pistols, air guns, ball bearing

- guns, paintball guns and replica guns
- Knives including all variations of bladed objects e.g. Pocket knives, craft knives, etc
- Pyrotechnics including fireworks, smoke bombs, handheld and distress flares
- Other objects, even if manufactured for a non-violent purpose but which have a potentially violent use i.e. the purpose of carrying the object is for use, or threat of use as a weapon (such items could include such things as scissors, nail files, pencil sharpener blades, sticks, bats, keys, chisels, screwdrivers, hammers and other tools)

Given the nature of certain work, some students may use tools / equipment that could be used as an offensive weapon. Hartpury acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that those items that belong to Hartpury or which it stores securely for students or staff follow documented procedures for issue and collection. When using such equipment or tools students are always under staff supervision.

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

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Hartpury has clear behaviour management and disciplinary policies and procedures. Students are aware of the procedure that relates to them when they commence a programme of study.

The procedure allows a proper investigation to take place in response to any incident so that the full facts are established. Part of that process can be suspension of individuals in accordance with the appropriate policy. Incidents involving threatened or actual aggression would normally result in the alleged aggressor being suspended. All such matters will be reported to senior staff with the authority to take such action.

The behaviour management/disciplinary outcome resulting from such incidents would depend on the specific circumstances. The matter will, always be regarded as very serious and could result in exclusion from Hartpury, even of someone with no previous record of unacceptable behaviour. Hartpury would not accept excuses of self-protection for carrying offensive weapons as any student fearing aggression should immediately bring the matter to the attention of an appropriate member of staff.

Hartpury would normally inform the Police of such incidents, certainly, if the possession of offensive weapons were involved.

Unfortunately, individuals threatening or perpetrating aggressive acts may be persons with no legitimate reason for being on campus. Such individuals will always be asked to leave the campus and not to return. Each incident is judged separately and the Police may or may not be informed or called. No member of staff is expected to put themselves at risk by dealing with an aggressive individual and the Safeguarding mobile and the Deputy Principal Resources or if unavailable another member of the Executive team must always be notified should there be any such threat, actual or perceived.

Hartpury will seek to provide training for those members of staff authorised to undertake searches for weapons. Screening, should it take place, should be out of view of anyone

other than those people who have to be present and with appropriate sensitivity to any cultural or religious issues, which may arise.

All incidents and occurrences should be properly documented on MyConcern with details of time, date, location, persons involved, witnesses, events and action taken. The report will be reviewed by an Assistant Head of Safeguarding who will ensure that the Deputy Principal Resources/DSL is appraised of the incident.

It will be the responsibility of Heads of Departments to ensure that students are all aware of the policy through appropriate communication channels. It will also be their responsibility along with members of the Executive Team to ensure that staff are aware of the policy and their responsibility under it to report any suspected or actual incident to appropriate senior staff.

The Executive Team will take action against individuals who come onto campus, in possession of offensive weapons when they have no business to be here. This will include involving the Police and taking legal proceedings if necessary to prevent repetitions.

CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH PERMIT USE OF OFFENSIVE WEAPONS ON THE HARTPURY CAMPUS

Firearms

In relation to Shoot Days, Unit content delivery, Clay Shoot events (practicing & competition) or pest and predator control, students may have their own shotgun certificate granted by the relevant local Police Force or they will be supervised by a member of staff or a certificate holder. The clay shooting activities fall under the Fire Arms Act 1968-97, Section 11(6) giving approval for Clay Shooting activities, for anyone without a shot gun licence, under supervision. Students (shotgun license holders) must follow the formal protocol should they wish to bring a shotgun on site for the purposes of a timetabled shoot. It may be that students use a Hartpury firearm or personal shotgun on Hartpury shoot days, controlling pest and predators on the Hartpury estates if given appropriate authorisation by a relevant staff member.

Knives

Students are not permitted to bring their own knives on to campus. However, given the nature of the tasks undertaken as part of Gamekeeping activities, Shoot Days, there may be occasions where the students will be issued with knives/dispatch tools, provided by Hartpury, to complete the specific activity or assessment being undertaken at that time and at the instructor's discretion. All knives or dispatch tools will be issued with a record kept of who the equipment has been lent to with the date, then when collected at the end of the day/activity tools can be recorded back in via a sign in and out register. All knives will be kept in a safe and secure place when not in use. Knives may be used for day to day gamekeeping tasks such as pest and predator control, shoot days and estate tasks.

Pest and Predator Control

Pest and predator control is undertaken by students as part of their pest and predator module; they are required to set and monitor numerous traps for different species. The students will use traps that are legal and specific to their targeted species including call/decoy birds that will need to be looked after, following best practice guidelines and legislation. No snares are to be set by students on campus due to the high population of badgers. Students at times may be required to use firearms to undertake pest control;

this will be done under close and strict supervision of a member of staff qualified to do so. Fox control will be carried out by members of the Game and Countryside staff only. Traps will also be run through the summer while students are off site as an on-going pest and predator control programme. Rodenticide will be used by members of the Game and Countryside staff who are qualified to do so, this may be observed by students during timetabled sessions.

Legislative Guidance

Members of staff have explicit power to use reasonable force to restrain students to prevent injury to others or damage to property. (Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006.)

The powers are to screen students, even without suspicion and without their consent, and to search students for weapons with reasonable grounds for suspicion but without their consent. The powers are subject to the following conditions:

- They are exercised on the institution's premises or elsewhere where the member of staff has lawful control of the student (e.g. during a field trip).
- Searches are undertaken or authorised by the Residential Safeguarding Manager and/or designated person, 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 but the staff member can require the student to remove a hat, gloves, scarf or shoes.
- The person conducting the search must be of the same sex as the student and may only carry out the search in the presence of another member of staff of the same sex as the student.
- Anything found, which the member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting is a knife, blade or in law, an offensive weapon, may be seized but must be handed over to the police as soon as reasonably practicable.
- The person exercising the power may in doing so use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances. Where the staff member anticipates force may be required it may be advisable to call the police if it is feasible to postpone the search until they arrive.

REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICIES

- Academic Student Behaviour Management Policy (college students)
- Non-Academic Behaviour Management Policy (college students)
- Student Disciplinary Policy (university students)
- Operating Procedure for Search and Confiscation
- Health & Safety Policy

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

As with all Hartpury policies and procedures, due care has been taken to ensure that this policy is appropriate to all members of staff and students regardless of their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and transgender status.

The policy will be applied fairly and consistently whilst upholding Hartpury's commitment to providing equality to all.

Hartpury is committed towards promoting positive mental health and aims to create a culture of support where staff and students can talk about mental health problems without the fear of stigma or discrimination.

APPROVAL & REVIEW CYCLE		
Reviewed By	Deputy Principal Resources	April 2025
Approved By	Exec	April 2027
Interim-Review	No	-
Next Review Date		April 2027