

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXX – By email

**Force Disclosure Unit
Police Headquarters**
London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date 18th February 2025

Our Ref FOI 2025-212

Dear XXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 17th February 2025 regarding bladed articles in schools.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

Following receipt of your request, research was conducted by Team Performance at Wiltshire Police. Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You wrote:

For the following calendar years: 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024

1. How many reports have you had of "having an article with blade or point on school premises" Home Office code 008/27?
2. How many reports have you had to "threaten with a blade or sharply pointed article on school premises" Home Office code 008/62
3. For both questions 1 and 2 – how young was the youngest person who was suspected of the offence?
4. What was the outcome for questions 1 and 2?
5. How many reports have you received that a pupil has assaulted / attacked a member of school staff involving a blade or sharp instrument? (what was the outcome?)
6. How many reports have you received that a pupil has threatened a member of school staff involving a blade or sharp instrument? (what was the outcome?)

Our response:

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at s1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at s1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

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Whilst I can confirm Wiltshire Police do hold the requested information, section 12(1) of the FOIA states:-

Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

The information you are requesting, specifically in regard to questions 5 and 6, is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. Whilst our systems do have a location flag, this is not compulsory to complete, and therefore data pulled using this filter would be unreliable. In order to retrieve the information you are requesting, we would be required to manually review every occurrence for Violence Against the Person offences from 2020 – 2024. This would mean reading the occurrence logs and possibly other documents of all recorded incidents, to first ascertain whether the incident took place on school premises and then determine whether the incident is regarding a pupil assaulting, attacking or threatening a member of school staff using a blade or sharp instrument.

Under the circumstances I am absolutely confident that to locate, retrieve and extract the information you seek would by far exceed the time obligations upon this authority to comply, and in so doing would exceed the fees limits. This is set at £450 calculated at a flat rate of £25 per hour for those work activities comprising of confirming the information is held, locating it, retrieving it and extracting it. Therefore the whole of the request should fall under the exemption of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please note:

If one part of the request engages a Section 12 response, the whole request will engage a Section 12 response. The reason being is due to the fact that locating, retrieving and extracting any further information would only add to the already exceeded time obligations.

Forces may use different recording systems, therefore it may be possible some Forces can provide this information where others cannot.

Ordinarily under our Section 16 obligation to provide advice and assistance we would advise you of a way to refine your request to a more manageable level. Due to the difficulties in obtaining the requested information, as outlined above, I cannot think of a way in which this could be achieved.

Although excess cost removes the Forces' obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved or available before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request. What I can provide you with is documented below:

1.

Distinct Count of OccNo	Having an article with a blade or point on school premises	Possess an article with a blade or point on school/further education premises	Grand Total
2020	5	0	5
2021	11	0	11
2022	5	13	18
2023	0	13	13
2024	0	14	14
Grand Total	21	40	61

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2.

Distinct Count of OccNo	Threaten a person with a blade/sharply pointed article on school premises	Threaten with a blade or sharply pointed article on school/further education premises	Grand Total
2020	1	0	1
2021	0	0	0
2022	1	0	1
2023	0	2	2
2024	0	1	1
Grand Total	2	3	5

3. 10 and 12 years

4. Question 1 outcomes

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total
1: Charged	1	0	0	0	1	2
11: Named suspect below age of criminal responsibility	1	1	0	0	0	2
15: Police - named suspect, victim supports but evidential difficulties	1	5	4	3	0	13
20: Other body/agency has investigation primacy	0	2	7	3	5	17
21: Police - named suspect, investigation not in the public interest	1	0	1	0	0	2
22: Diversionary, educational or intervention activity, resulting from crime reports, has been undertaken and is not in the public interest to take any further action.	0	1	4	6	1	12
8: Youth restorative disposal	0	0	1	0	3	4
Cancelled/transferred	1	2	1	1	0	5
New	0	0	0	0	4	4
Grand Total	5	11	18	13	14	61

Question 2 outcomes

	2020	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total
1: Charged	1	0	0	0	1
15: Police - named suspect, victim supports but evidential difficulties	0	1	0	0	1
16: Victim declines/withdraws support - named suspect identified	0	0	1	0	1
18: Investigation complete no suspect identified	0	0	0	1	1
20: Other body/agency has investigation primacy	0	0	1	0	1
Grand Total	1	1	2	1	5

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Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption applicable to the information requested is:

Section 12 - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

In accordance with section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this particular request.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss the withheld information.

Yours sincerely,

Force Disclosure Decision Maker