

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ
London Road
Devizes
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN
Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.uk

disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

XXXXXX – by email

Date: 20th January 2026

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2026 / 070

Reply contact name is: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 15th January 2026 concerning Dangerous Weapons 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.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You wrote:

For the last 3 full calendar years (2023/24/25) and for as much of 2026 as possible please can you supply:

1. The number of pupils found in school with a weapon or dangerous implement. Please break down according to primary/secondary school.
2. The number and type of weapons or dangerous implements seized from schools. Please break down according to primary/secondary.
3. The number and age of school pupils charged with offences relating to possession of a weapon or dangerous implement.
4. The number who were then prosecuted in court, given a caution or no further action was taken.
5. Of those who were prosecuted, the type of punishment handed down.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Our response:

The information that you are requesting is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval.

Whilst our crime recording system(s) are sophisticated and we have a number of designated fields in which we can record information relative to a crime (and upon which we can theoretically then run searches on), we do not have a specific field in which we record whether a School or other educational establishment is the location of a crime of this nature.

We do have a "Premises" / "Location" field which could be used to record this, however this field is not mandatory for anyone recording the details of a crime and is – in practice – seldom used.

In addition, when the "location" flag is used, it also takes into account the general area around a given location, so any occurrences stated as being at a location of a school could be in the school premises / grounds but may also be in surrounding streets or the immediate locality as well. For that reason, we also cannot rely on the content of the "location" field to produce worthwhile and trustworthy results – certainly not those that are accurate enough to then be placed into the public domain as this FOI response will be.

Whilst there are a number of Home Office Codes which are used to report the use of knives or bladed items in schools, these particular codes are generally related to either possession of bladed items or threats to use them. If an incident occurred where an individual was wounded in a school by a knife, then this would be recorded differently (probably under Violence Against the Person or Assault etc) and not feature in any searches undertaken using those specific HO Codes.

We are also not able to undertake "wildcard" or free-text searches for the word "School" in crime reports as establishments of this nature are often recorded in our systems in a number of different ways, for instance Kingsdown Comprehensive, Marlborough College, Devizes Sports College or under their general name of "St Johns" and so on.

The only way to obtain the information you require would be for us to review every crime recorded for the time period you require in which a "weapon used" flag has been specified and review each record in turn to initially see if it meets your criteria or not and – if it does – then make a manual record of the relevant information required (type of offence, type of weapon, how it was used, etc). This would inevitably mean we would need to review and read the occurrence log of a crime and possibly other paperwork such as statements, etc.

Given that for the time period you require, there have been 5,648 individual crimes recorded on our systems where a weapon flag has been ticked – and allowing a very conservative 3 minutes per record to undertake this task – this would take in excess of 280 man-hours to achieve. Under the circumstances therefore, 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.

Ordinarily under our section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request to a more manageable level. However, due to the difficulties outlined above, I cannot see how this can be achieved in this particular case.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the 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.

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed to me and been considered in the light of your request within the time constraints applicable under the legislation.

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Penny
Disclosure Decision Maker

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.



Force Disclosure Unit

Wiltshire Police HQ, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2DN
Telephone 101 ext 62005

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from Wiltshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing to the:

Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police Headquarters,
London Road, Devizes,
Wiltshire,
SN10 2DN

Email at disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk.

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Force Disclosure Unit within 20 working days of the Force's response to the original FoI request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing to include confirmation of the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker, who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Force Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The Independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the Independent Decision Maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk