



# Triumph Learning Trust

Aspiration - Collaboration - Innovation

## Kirpan Policy

### Policy Details

<b>Policy Level</b>	Trust
<b>Document Approver</b>	Trust Board
<b>Document Status</b>	Final
<b>Applicable to</b>	All Trust Employees
<b>Review Frequency</b>	Every 3 Years

### Revision History

Revision	Date	Details	Approved by
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## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Aims.....	3
3. Background .....	3
4. Trust Uniform Policy .....	3

## 1. Introduction

This policy provides information for all stakeholders within Triumph Learning Trust regarding the wearing of the Kirpan by Sikhs. This advice applies to teachers, members of staff and pupils who have gone through the Amrit ceremony (i.e. who have been initiated into the Khalsa).

## 2. Aims

- Ensure religious tolerance and harmony within our schools
- Encourage and value pupils religious and cultural practices
- Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all pupils

## 3. Background

Guru Gobind Singh, the founder of the Khalsa (community of Sikhs), instructed its members to wear five special signs to show that they were Sikhs. Known as the five Ks. Self-discipline is of the utmost importance and a member of the Khalsa is expected to observe a strict code of conduct. It is not generally considered appropriate to wear one of the five Ks without wearing the other four. The Kirpan is a small dagger that must be worn by all initiated Sikhs at all times. The Kirpan is not a weapon in the normal sense of the word. Its concept, wearing and use within the Sikh religion as an article of faith is unique and original.

The Offensive Weapons Act 1996 states that a person who has an offensive weapon (such as a dagger) with them on a school premises is guilty of an offence, unless they have lawful authority for having the article upon their person. The legislation goes on to state that religious reasons would constitute a defence in this regard.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) and relevant Health and Safety legislation make clear that schools must be safe environments where all reasonable measures are taken to ensure those present do not come to harm.

The Trust values are fundamental to how the Trust operates. It is our commitment to make sure that the value of inclusion is at the forefront of all we do, with particular consideration of our obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and the Offensive weapons Act (1996). In implementing this Kirpan Policy, we aim to guide our schools in balancing the rights of individuals with the best interests of school communities as a whole.

## 4. Trust Uniform Policy

We will consider requests that reasonable adjustments are made to normal school uniform policy on the grounds of any protected characteristic, including those related to religious beliefs. These requests should be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account all relevant guidance and legislation. Pupils should not wear uniform outside of the normal policy prior to any request being made and considered. Any pupil who has been through the Amrit

ceremony of initiation, and is therefore authorised and expected to wear the Five Ks should seek permission through the school HT prior to wearing the Kirpan.

The Kirpan should not be more than 10cm in length, including both blade and handle. It must remain sheathed and enclosed in secured padding, sewn up and restrained with a cord so it cannot be withdrawn and worn under clothes and not visible. If your child is in primary school, we request that they wear a small, plastic kirpan around the neck. Parents/carers wishing otherwise should discuss this with the school leader on a case-by-case basis.

The Kirpan should never be unsheathed and should never be used as a weapon to threaten others. In either case, the Kirpan would constitute an offensive weapon within the law and the incident should be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, which may include police involvement. If a Khalsa pupil is not wearing all of the Five Ks, the Kirpan should be removed from them and parents / carers contacted to discuss this with them.

During physical activities, the school should risk assess the nature of the activity to determine whether it is safe for a Khalsa pupil to wear their Kirpan. Where a risk assessment shows it to be unsafe, this should be discussed with the pupil and parents / carers so that an appropriate alternative arrangement can be made.

The Headteacher reserves the discretion to remove the Kirpan from the pupil in the event that any situation arises that poses a safety risk to any member of the school community.