

Air Rifles and Cadet Shooting Safety and Management Policy

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Directors on:	Autumn 2026
This Policy will be reviewed by the GLC Board on:	Autumn 2027

GLC Mission Statement

The GLC's mission is to develop active and thriving citizens within a diverse, truly fair and equal community.

This will be achieved through:

- High quality teaching that deliberately develops competencies of curiosity, creativity, communication and critical-thinking;
- An inspiring and meaningful curriculum;
- The development of productive relationships by instilling the values of compassion, resilience, responsibility and aspiration to prepare our young people for learning and life;
- A commitment to the wellbeing of our staff;
- A culture of professional generosity, collaboration, challenge and support throughout the GLC;
- The development of effective external partnerships for the benefit and wellbeing of our community.

Equalities Statement

The GLC's commitment to equality is enshrined in our mission statement to develop 'active and thriving citizens within a diverse, truly fair and equal community'.

We are a vibrant, innovative and successful organisation: we work hard to be the place of choice to work and to learn. Across the 5 academies of the GLC, we pledge that everyone enjoys an equality of opportunity. We work tirelessly to ensure that individual characteristics including age, ethnicity, socio-economic background, academic ability, disability, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation are not discriminated against in any way. We create inclusive environments characterised by mutual respect where difference is celebrated.

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Air Rifles and Cadet Shooting

Safety and Management Policy

Governing the lawful holding, secure storage and safe use of air rifles in support of cadet activities.

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out how The Gateway Academy holds, stores and uses air rifles in connection with cadet shooting activities and the standards that all staff, instructors, volunteers, cadets and visitors must follow. Its purpose is to ensure that these activities are conducted lawfully, safely and with proper regard for the welfare of young people at all times.

The policy applies to every air rifle held on or brought onto the Academy site for cadet purposes, to all associated ammunition and to all shooting activities whether they take place on site or at an approved off-site range. It should be read alongside the Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Educational Visits Policy and Behaviour Policy.

Note on regulatory framework: Where the Academy operates a Combined Cadet Force (CCF) contingent, air rifles and shooting are additionally governed by Ministry of Defence (MOD) and Cadet Forces regulations and by the direction of the affiliated Cadet Training Team (CTT) and Regular/Reserve support staff. Those regulations take precedence and this policy supplements rather than replaces them.

2. Legal Basis and Compliance

Air rifles are subject to the Firearms Act 1968 and subsequent amendments. An air rifle generating muzzle energy above the legal threshold (over 12 ft-lb for a rifle) is a firearm requiring a firearms certificate; lower-powered air rifles are still regulated and it is an offence for a person under 18 to be sold, or in most circumstances to have with them, an air weapon except in specified supervised situations.

- All air rifles held by or on behalf of the Academy are below the legal threshold that require a firearms certificate. No air rifle is over 12 ft.lb.
- Any student using an air rifle is supervised by a trained CFAV (Cadet Force Adult Volunteer) over the age of 21. It is unlawful to allow a person under 18 to use an air weapon except under the supervision of a person aged 21 or over, or on premises and in circumstances permitted by law; all activity under this policy is supervised accordingly.
- The Academy cooperates fully with MOD/CCF authorities and complies with any storage or handling conditions they specify.

3. Secure Storage of Weapons and Ammunition

Secure storage is the single most important control in this policy and is subject to close scrutiny by the Contingent Commander and the Head of School. The following standards apply at all times when weapons are not in supervised use.

3.1 Storage standards

- Air rifles are stored in an approved locked steel gun cabinet or armoury that meets the standard specified by the MOD.
- Pellets are stored securely and separately from the weapons.
- The storage location is fixed onto a load bearing wall in a locked room and access is restricted to authorised key-holders only.
- Weapons are never stored in classrooms, offices, unsecured cupboards or vehicles.

3.2 Key control

- Keys to the cabinet / armoury are held only by named, vetted key-holders and when not in use they are locked in a separate safe.

- A record identifies who holds keys and keys are stored securely and separately from the cabinet when not in use.

3.3 Registers and audit

- A weapons register records every weapon and its movement in and out of storage, signed by the issuing and receiving authorised person.
- An ammunition record accounts for stock held, issued, expended and returned.
A full physical audit and reconciliation of all weapons and ammunition is conducted weekly, with a comprehensive audit monthly, and immediately following any activity. Any discrepancy is investigated without delay.

4. Authorised Personnel and Supervision

Only suitably trained and qualified adults may issue, instruct with, or supervise the use of air rifles. Cadets never have access to weapons or ammunition except under direct, competent adult supervision.

- All shooting activity is led by a qualified Range Conducting Officer or equivalently trained instructor holding a current, recognised qualification appropriate to the weapon and range.
- Supervising adults are aged 21 or over and have completed the Academy's safer-recruitment and vetting checks, including an enhanced DBS check appropriate to their role with children.
- A minimum supervision ratio is set for each activity in the risk assessment and is never exceeded; a firing point is never left unsupervised.
- The number of cadets firing at any one time does not exceed the number that can be safely supervised and controlled from the firing point.

5. Risk and Safe Use

5.1 The range and set-up

- Shooting takes place only on a properly constituted and correctly set-up range with an adequate backstop and defined safety zones and danger area.
- The range is inspected before use, access by non-participants is controlled and clear signage and range flags / indicators are displayed where required.

5.2 Conduct of firing

- A full safety briefing is given before every session, covering the weapon, the range commands, the safety rules and the action to take in an emergency.
- Muzzle discipline is maintained at all times — weapons are pointed only in a safe direction (down the range) and treated as loaded until proven otherwise.
- Weapons are loaded only on the firing point and only on the command of the person conducting the range; firing takes place only on command.
- Appropriate eye protection and any other specified personal protective equipment are worn.
- Weapons are cleared, inspected and made safe before leaving the firing point and before return to storage.

6. Cadet Training and Eligibility

- Cadets complete the required weapon-handling instruction and pass a Weapon Handling Test (or equivalent competency check) before being permitted to fire live.
- A record is kept of each cadet's training, tests passed and shooting undertaken.
- Any relevant medical, physical or behavioural factors are considered before a cadet takes part and participation may be restricted or withheld on safety or safeguarding grounds.

7. Transport of Weapons

When weapons are moved to or from an off-site range, they are transported securely and lawfully.

- Weapons are carried unloaded, made safe and kept out of sight during transport.
- Weapons and ammunition are never left unattended in a vehicle; a responsible authorised adult remains accountable for them throughout the journey.

- Where practicable, weapons and ammunition are transported separately and the movement is recorded in the weapons register.

8. Safeguarding and Behaviour

The welfare of cadets is paramount. This policy operates within and is subordinate to, the Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

- Any concern about a cadet's wellbeing, conduct or suitability to handle a weapon is raised without delay with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and where relevant, the activity is stopped.
- Deliberate misuse of a weapon, breach of safety rules, or unsafe behaviour results in immediate removal from the activity and may lead to disciplinary action under the Behaviour Policy.
- Adults working with cadets model and enforce a strong safety culture and never normalise unsafe handling.
- Any disclosure or safeguarding concern arising during shooting activities is handled through the Academy's normal safeguarding procedures.
- Any student who poses a known health and safety risk to themselves or others, will not be permitted to be a cadet.

9. Incident Reporting, Insurance and Loss

- Any accidental discharge, injury, near-miss or breach of safety is reported immediately to the person conducting the range and recorded, then escalated to the SLT lead/ board and through the Academy's accident / incident reporting procedures.
- The loss or theft of any weapon or ammunition is reported to the police immediately and to MOD / CCF authorities where applicable and is treated as a serious incident.
- Serious incidents are reviewed to identify lessons learned and this policy and associated risk assessments are updated where necessary.