POLICY: RESPONDING TO ARMED OR VIOLENT INTRUDERS

Policy Status: Safeguarding and Health & Safety Policy
Applies to: All staff, examiners, Teacher Members, Centres, contractors and visitors involved in I-PATH activities
Policy Owner: Head Office
Governance Oversight: Examinations & Standards Committee and Grand Council
Review Cycle: Annual or following significant incident, guidance update or risk review

1. Purpose of the Policy

This policy sets out how I-PATH expects serious incidents involving armed or violent intruders to be managed in a way that prioritises:

- the safety of learners, staff and visitors
- compliance with English law
- clarity of roles and responsibilities
- effective communication and escalation
- post-incident care, review and improvement

The policy applies to any venue where I-PATH activity takes place, including but not limited to:

- teaching centres
- examination venues
- rehearsal spaces
- live or recorded examination environments

2. Scope and Definitions

An armed or violent intruder is any individual who poses an immediate and serious threat to life or safety, including (but not limited to) the presence or suspected presence of:

- a firearm
- a knife or bladed weapon
- any other weapon capable of causing serious harm

This policy does not replace statutory guidance or emergency-service instructions.
Police instructions must always take precedence.

3. Core Principles

In any incident involving an armed or violent intruder:

- Preservation of life is the priority

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- Staff and learners must not attempt to confront or apprehend the intruder
- Actions must be proportionate, calm and lawful
- Decisions must be made based on immediate risk, not routine procedure
- Clear communication and accurate record-keeping are essential

4. Immediate Response

4.1 Recognising a Threat

Any individual who becomes aware of a potential armed or violent intruder must:

- act immediately
- not investigate or approach the individual
- not attempt to verify the threat personally

4.2 Contacting Emergency Services

Emergency services must be contacted without delay by calling 999.

The caller should provide, if known:

- their name and location
- the nature of the threat
- a description of the individual
- the suspected weapon
- last known location or direction of movement

If it is unsafe to speak, the caller should remain on the line where possible.

5. Protective Actions (Run / Hide / Follow Police Instruction)

Actions taken must be guided by immediate risk and police advice.

5.1 Evacuation (Run)

If it is safe to do so:

- leave the area immediately
- encourage others to leave where possible
- move to a place of safety well away from the building
- do not stop to collect belongings

Evacuation should only occur where it reduces risk, not increases it.

5.2 Lockdown and Shelter (Hide)

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If evacuation is not safe:

- move to a secure room
- lock or barricade doors where possible
- stay out of sight of doors and windows
- turn off lights where appropriate
- silence mobile phones and alarms

Individuals should remain calm, quiet and still until instructed otherwise by police.

5.3 Interaction with the Intruder

- Do not engage, confront or attempt negotiation
- Do not open doors unless instructed by police
- Do not respond to alarms, knocks or voices unless verified as police

6. Communication During an Incident

6.1 Internal Communication

During an active incident:

- communication must be minimal and purposeful
- only essential information should be shared
- informal messaging platforms must not be relied upon as the primary alert mechanism

Centres should use their pre-agreed emergency communication method appropriate to their setting, ensuring messages are clear and factual.

6.2 Communication with Parents and Carers

Communication with parents and carers must:

- be coordinated
- be factual and calm
- avoid speculation
- avoid compromising police activity

Where appropriate, communication should be issued by Centre leadership or Head Office once safety allows.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

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7.1 All Staff, Examiners and Teacher Members

Must:

- be familiar with this policy
- act to protect learners and themselves
- follow police instructions at all times
- report incidents promptly

7.2 Centre Leadership / Responsible Person on Site

Must:

- coordinate immediate response where safe to do so
- ensure emergency services are contacted
- account for learners and staff once safe
- liaise with police and emergency responders
- inform I-PATH Head Office as soon as practicable

7.3 I-PATH Head Office

Must:

- provide support and guidance
- ensure appropriate escalation to governance
- record the incident formally
- consider safeguarding, welfare and regulatory implications

8. Post-Incident Actions

8.1 "All Clear"

Only police or emergency services may declare an incident over.
No return to normal activity should occur until authorised.

8.2 Welfare and Support

Following an incident:

- emotional and psychological support must be offered
- adjustments may be required for learners or staff
- safeguarding considerations must be reviewed

8.3 Reporting and Review

All incidents must be:

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- recorded factually
- reviewed internally
- escalated to the Examinations & Standards Committee where appropriate
- reported to the Grand Council as part of governance oversight

Learning points must be identified and used to strengthen procedures.

9. Training and Preparedness

Centres and staff involved in I-PATH activity are expected to:

- be aware of emergency procedures in their setting
- understand this policy
- participate in appropriate training or briefings

I-PATH will review guidance periodically to reflect best practice and emerging risks.

10. Relationship to Other Policies

This policy must be read alongside:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Communications Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Incident Reporting procedures

11. Review and Governance

This policy will be reviewed:

- annually
- following any serious incident
- where guidance or legal expectations change

Oversight sits with the Examinations & Standards Committee and the Grand Council.

Final Statement

I-PATH recognises that incidents involving armed or violent intruders are rare but serious.
Preparation, clarity and calm decision-making save lives.

This policy exists to ensure that safety, legality and accountability remain at the centre of every response.

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