

No Weapons Allowed

RESOURCES

Student Handout 1 — No Weapons Allowed

Student Handout 2 — Evaluating Rules

Optional: Attorney, Legislator, Police Officer and/or School Administrator

PROCEDURES

1. Read the scenario "No Weapons Allowed" (**Student Handout 1**) to the class.
2. Choose four or five students to become a human graph for each of the six cases.
Draw a line on the board as marked below:

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Undecided	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Explain to the class that you will describe several situations. Members of the human graph will react to each by standing in front of the number on the graph that corresponds with their opinion of whether or not they believe the situation violates the law.

3. Instruct the class that the members of the human graph are not allowed to speak, so the class will have to interpret their thoughts for them.
4. Read the first case out loud. Ask the human graph members, "Do you agree or disagree that this would be a violation of the law?" Allow time for human graph students to understand the statement and react by physically moving to a position on the line.
5. Now ask the rest of the class to give reasons why they think students have taken those positions. You may choose to let the human graph students explain their position after all of the students have commented. Human graph students are allowed to change their positions at any time if they hear arguments that they find persuasive.
6. Repeat activity using statements #2 through #6. You may choose to select different students to act as the human graph for each statement.
7. Continue with this process until all statements have been evaluated and discussed.

8. To debrief, ask the following questions:
 - (a) Does the no weapons rule need to be changed (use criteria on **Student Handout 2** — Evaluating Rules)? Why or why not? If so, how?
 - (b) Would the teachers, principal, students, parents, and/or surrounding community of Fairlaw School like the rule? Why? Why not?
 - (c) What are some rules you think schools should have to make them safer?
 - (d) Who can help make schools safer?
 - (e) What can they do?
 - (f) What can you do?

9. Resource Person: Invite an attorney, legislator, police officer, the school principal or assistant principal to visit the class. The guest can react to the students' arguments or lead a discussion using the debriefing questions. He/she can discuss the process of evaluating a case from all points of view, as did the students who were part of the human graph.

10. Optional: In groups of three or four, have students attempt to rewrite the rule to make it clearer and to include proposed consequences. Decide whether the consequences should be posted on the "No Weapons Allowed" sign.

11. Journal Writing Assignment: Students should write their answers to questions 8 (c), (d), (e), and (f).

Student Handout 1

Increasing violence in schools has caused the state legislature to pass a law which says that if students bring weapons to school, they can be expelled, their parents can be fined, and they can even be automatically transferred to adult court and be sentenced to up to two years in prison. Lawmakers want to get tough on crime and help the schools become safer. The Fairlaw School Board is also concerned about the safety of their students and has asked the principal to make sure that students understand that they cannot bring weapons to school. At all the entrances to the school, the sign "**No Weapons Allowed**" has been posted.

Should the law apply in the following cases? Keep in mind what the sign says — "**No Weapons Allowed**" — and why the legislators passed the law. What was their intent? Students should realize that they will have to define terms. What is a weapon?

1. Aaron, a fifth grade student, takes the city bus to school every day. On the bus, he is sometimes bothered by a group of older boys who take his lunch money and threaten to beat him up if he tells on them. He is so scared that he begins bringing a short metal pipe to school in his bookbag, which he plans to pull out to scare the big boys with if they start to hurt him. Is Aaron breaking the rule?
2. Keisha always carries a pocket knife that her dad gave her. She is artistic, and uses the pocket knife to whittle small statues out of wood while she is waiting for the bus to go to and from school. Is Keisha breaking the rule?
3. Dejon brings a butter knife to school to use at lunch to spread tuna fish on crackers. Is Dejon breaking the rule?
4. Karen has to walk through a bad neighborhood to get to school. She doesn't worry too much because she is on the baseball team and carries a baseball bat to school with her every day. Is Karen breaking the rule?
5. Jasmine brings a water gun to school and soaks all her friends at recess. Is Jasmine breaking the rule?
6. Andy saves rubber bands. He likes to shoot them at his friends. Is Andy breaking the rule?

You or the resource person may want to cite other examples: slingshot, Swiss Army Knife, etc.

Evaluating Rules

1. Are the rules
 - fair?
 - easy to understand?
 - well designed to achieve their purposes?
 - clear as to what is expected?
 - possible to follow?
 - in conflict with other rules?
 - in conflict with other important values?
 - easy to enforce?

2. Should the rules be
 - Kept as is?
 - Eliminated?
 - Changed?
 - Why?