# Education officials barred from answering questions on Hazlehead knife incident at Aberdeen committee meeting



Education officials in Aberdeen faced criticism after barring councillors from questioning them about a knife-related incident at Hazlehead Academy during a recent education committee meeting focused on violence in the city’s schools.

The incident, which took place last Thursday morning during the school break, involved a 12-year-old girl who was hospitalised with injuries that required stitches. Police were called to the west end secondary school, where it is believed the girl suffered wounds to her head and face. A 14-year-old girl has since been charged in connection with the alleged attack.

During Tuesday’s meeting, tensions escalated as councillors sought clarity on the incident and on measures being taken to police behaviour in schools. Lower Deeside councillor M. Tauqeer Malik expressed frustration over being denied the opportunity to question education officials. He criticised Martin Greig, the Liberal Democrat education convener, who had structured the meeting to prohibit discussion of the ongoing police investigation.

Mr Malik told the committee, “We did not get the opportunity to ask questions… When I raise these things you (Mr Greig) just start shouting at me. There is a process where you get to ask questions and get answers, but you did not give us the opportunity to ask questions in relation to a very important issue.”

Other opposition councillors reiterated concerns over the restrictions on debate, highlighting a broader dissatisfaction with how the matter was being handled.

The situation further intensified when Conservative councillor Richard Brooks attempted to mention the knife incident. However, he was swiftly silenced by the council’s legal team and was reminded by Lord Provost David Cameron that the case is subject to an active police investigation. Following a consultation with legal advisers, councillor Brooks was prevented from discussing the knife attack publicly despite the issue having been raised in the Scottish Parliament the previous week.

The committee declined a proposal from Mr Malik to reinstate anti-weapon education programmes previously introduced after the 2015 killing of Bailey Gwynne, citing the ongoing nature of the police inquiry as the reason for refusal.

John Murray, the council’s representative for Roman Catholic schools, expressed concern over the committee's focus on procedural matters rather than the behaviour issues themselves. “I would like people to consider how that looks to the general public in Aberdeen that over this very, very important issue, what we’re debating is what committee a particular report should go to. There are huge concerns about the behaviour of some children in schools. This is something that the education committee should be focusing a lot of time and attention on,” he said during the meeting.

Council co-leader Christian Allard described the handling of the incident as “walking a tightrope,” acknowledging the sensitivity surrounding live investigations. He noted that although a forthcoming report might be insufficient to address specific incidents immediately, it would contribute towards a broader plan to tackle school behaviour concerns.

Councillors ultimately voted to receive a detailed report on behaviour policing at the next education committee meeting scheduled for June.

The Press and Journal (Aberdeen) is reporting that the debate reflects growing unease among elected members regarding school safety and the management of violent incidents, underscoring the complexities of addressing such matters amid ongoing legal proceedings.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-38211909> - This article discusses the implementation of anti-weapon lessons in Aberdeen schools following the death of Bailey Gwynne, highlighting the city's proactive approach to addressing weapon-related incidents in educational settings.
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-38023898> - This piece details the approval of a strategy by Aberdeen City Council aimed at preventing weapons from entering schools, emphasizing the council's commitment to enhancing school safety.
3. <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/education-and-childcare/school-life/life-not-knife-campaign> - This page outlines the 'Life Not Knife' campaign launched by Aberdeen City Council, focusing on raising awareness about the consequences of carrying weapons and promoting safer communities.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-22764783> - This article reports on two men charged with discharging a firearm at Hazlehead Academy, highlighting past incidents involving weapons at the school.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-37937202> - This report covers the council's strategy to prevent weapons in schools, including measures like raising awareness and deploying street workers in areas with high anti-social behavior.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-43315227> - This article discusses a five-year-old boy found with a knife in an Aberdeen primary school, underscoring ongoing concerns about weapon incidents in local schools.
7. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6744010/hazlehead-academy-knife-incident-council-update/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data