

Guidelines on Class Licences for Schools under the Guns, Explosives and Weapons Control (School Use — Class Licence) Order 2025

Overview

The Guns, Explosives and Weapons Control (School Use — Class Licence) Order 2025 provides automatic class licences for certain school-related activities involving explosive precursors and airguns. This guideline explains who is automatically class licensed, for what activities, and the conditions that must be met.

A class licence is an automatic licence that authorises specific categories of persons to carry out certain regulated activities involving guns, explosives, or weapons without needing to apply for individual licences, provided they meet the eligibility criteria and comply with the prescribed conditions set out in the relevant class licence order.

Important: If your school's activities fall outside the scope of these class licences, you will need to apply for individual licences under the Guns, Explosives and Weapons Control Act 2021.

Part 1: Explosive Precursor Use in Schools

Who is Class Licensed

Students (Paragraph 6) - Automatically class licensed: All students of the following schools:

- Government secondary schools
- Government-aided secondary schools
- Independent schools
- Government junior colleges
- Government-aided junior colleges
- Relevant post-secondary education schools (polytechnics, ITE)
- Religious schools
- Local universities
- Foreign system schools
- Schools providing private education by registered private education institutions

Authorised activities: Use of explosive precursors in school laboratories or craft/repair workshops for:

- Performing experiments during lessons or training
- Conducting analysis or research as part of coursework
- Practical training as part of coursework
- Experiments or practical training during assessments

School Operators (Paragraphs 8 & 10) - Automatically class licensed: Operators of:

- Government secondary schools
- Government-aided secondary schools
- Independent schools
- Government junior colleges
- Government-aided junior colleges
- Institute of Technical Education
- Religious schools

Authorised activities:

- Acquire, possess, store and transfer explosive precursors
- Dispose of explosive precursors no longer required

Principals and Teachers (Paragraph 14) - Automatically class licensed: Principals and teachers of schools listed under school operators above, plus those at other institutions where the operator holds an EP licence.

Authorised activities: Possess and use explosive precursors in school laboratories or craft/repair workshops for educational purposes.

Key Conditions for Explosive Precursor Activities

For Students:

- Must be supervised by a teacher at all times
- Must follow teacher's instructions
- Cannot remove explosive precursors from laboratory/workshop
- Must immediately report any loss to teacher or principal

For School Operators:

- Only possess amounts necessary for permitted purposes
- Store in secure, suitable storerooms within school premises
- Install and maintain CCTV surveillance systems
- Keep recordings for at least 31 days
- Maintain accurate inventory records
- Establish procedures preventing unsupervised student access
- Report theft, loss or defined incidents to police immediately (call 999)
- Engage licensed disposal companies for destruction

For Principals and Teachers:

- No unsupervised access for students
- Possess only amounts necessary for educational tasks
- Follow school operator's lawful instructions
- Report incidents to school operator immediately
- Record-keeping Requirements

School operators must maintain detailed records for at least 3 years covering:

- Monthly inventory of explosive precursors
- Acquisition and disposal details
- Identity particulars of suppliers and recipients
- Usage records for permitted purposes

Part 2: Co-curricular Activities Using Airguns

Who is Class Licensed

School Operators (Paragraphs 19 & 20) - Automatically class licensed: Operators of schools with current venue approval for shooting ranges:

- Government primary schools
- Government-aided primary schools
- Government secondary schools
- Government-aided secondary schools
- Independent schools
- Government junior colleges
- Government-aided junior colleges

Authorised activities:

- Operate shooting ranges for acceptable purposes
- Acquire, possess, store airguns, airgun parts and accessories
- Supply airguns to students and coaches
- Arrange disposal when no longer required

Students (Paragraph 23) - Automatically class licensed: Students aged 10 and above from:

- Government secondary schools
- Government-aided secondary schools
- Independent schools
- Government junior colleges
- Government-aided junior colleges
- Relevant post-secondary education schools
- Religious schools
- Local universities
- Foreign system schools
- Schools providing private education by registered institutions

Requirements: Must not have medical/physical conditions impairing safe airgun use.

Authorised activities: Acquire, possess and use school-supplied airguns in approved shooting ranges for:

- Recreational target practice
- Competitive shooting contests
- Training in airgun use
- Airgun safety training

School Staff (Paragraph 25) - Automatically class licensed: Principals, teachers overseeing airgun programmes, airgun coaches, and other employees involved in shooting range operations.

Authorised activities: Possess, store, use and supply airguns in connection with acceptable purposes.

Key Conditions for Airgun Activities

For School Operators:

- Only allow airgun use (no other firearms)
- Ensure all airguns have identification marks and are in good working order
- Provide adequate supervision by qualified coaches or teachers
- Maintain appropriate security including surveillance and alarm systems
- Store airguns in secure armouries when not in use
- Report defined incidents to Licensing Officer immediately

For Students:

- Use airguns only within designated shooting arenas
- Always under supervision of qualified coach or teacher
- Follow all safety instructions
- Do not alter or tamper with airguns
- Take reasonable precautions against loss or theft
- Return airguns after use

For School Staff:

- Complete required safety training
- Operate only within approved shooting ranges
- Protect public safety and prevent alarm
- Follow proper supervision protocols
- Record-keeping Requirements

School operators must maintain records for at least 3 years covering:

- Monthly inventory of airguns and accessories
- Acquisition and supply details
- Identity particulars of users and supervisors
- Loan and return dates

Important Notes

Age Restrictions: Students under 10 years old cannot use airguns under these class licences.

Supervision Requirements: All student activities must be properly supervised according to specified standards.

Incident Reporting: Any "defined incidents" (serious injuries, deaths, property damage) must be reported immediately.

Venue Approval: Airgun activities require current venue approval for the shooting range.

Medical Fitness: Students with conditions affecting safe airgun use are excluded.

When You Need Individual Licences

You must apply for individual licences under the GEWCA if:

- Your school type is not listed in the class licence categories
- Your activities fall outside the permitted purposes
- You need to conduct activities not covered by these class licences
- Your shooting range lacks current venue approval

For questions about licensing requirements or to apply for individual licences, contact the relevant Licensing Officer under the Guns, Explosives and Weapons Control Act 2021.