



Queensland Police Service

Understanding the Kirpan



**For further information contact:
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A Kirpan is one of 5 'articles of faith' (Kakars) worn by members of the Sikh faith who have undergone an initiation ceremony.

The Kirpan resembles a small sword. It is normally kept in a sheath, attached to a strap and worn underneath clothing near the waist. It is not normally visible.

The 5 articles of faith include the Kesh (unshorn hair), Kanga (wooden comb), Kara (Iron Bangle), Kachhera (Prescribed shorts-undergarments) and Kirpan. To neglect to wear one of these is seen as a lapse in religious practice by baptised Sikhs.

Weapons Act 1990 (Qld)

S 51 Possession of a knife in a public place or a school

- (1) A person must not physically possess a knife in a public place or a school, unless the person has a reasonable excuse.
- (4) Also, it is a reasonable excuse for subsection (1), to the extent the subsection relates to a public place, to physically possess a knife for genuine religious purposes.

Example —

A Sikh may possess, in a public place, a knife known as a kirpan to comply with the person's religious faith.

- (3) However, it is not a reasonable excuse to physically possess a knife in a public place or a school for self-defence purposes.
- (5) However, it is not a reasonable excuse to physically possess a knife in a school for genuine religious purposes.
- (6) In deciding what is a reasonable excuse for subsection (1), regard may be had, among other things, to whether the way the knife is held in possession, or when and where it is held in possession, would cause a reasonable person concern that he or she, or someone else in the vicinity, may be threatened or harmed.