Kirpan Policy for Villa Park

Links for further information
http://www.sikhs.org/art12.htm
https://assets.college.police.uk/s3fs-public/2021-02/sikh-articles-of-faith-in-the-workplace.pdf
https://www.basicsofsikhi.com/post/what-is-a-kirpan

Aston Villa Football Club, along with organisations around the world, support the rights of baptised Sikh's to wear the Kirpan as part of their religion. The Kirpan wearing Sikh will not be discriminated against for having this ceremonial dagger in their possession.

The kirpan is a symbolic dagger worn as a religious symbol by members of the Sikh community. It is especially important to those who have been through an initiation process known as 'Amritdhari' where they are obliged to wear the 'five Ks' or 'articles of faith' – one of these being the kirpan. Whilst non-Amritdhari Sikhs may be comfortable wearing symbolic versions of the kirpan such as a miniature version on a necklace or to have it etched into their kanga (wooden comb), those that are Amritdhari are obliged and should be allowed to express their religious beliefs freely and wear kirpan as ordained by the Khalsa. The kirpan is not classified as an offensive weapon under the Offensive Weapons Act and it is an offence under the Racial Discrimination Act to deny an Amritdhari Sikh the right to wear the kirpan publicly.

Aston Villa Football club work in conjunction with the Premier League and the FA to ensure safety for all match going supporters so in case of any dispute regarding the Kirpan, the final decision will be taken by the safety officer on the day.

Aston Villa have set out a number of conditions for all parties.

- Kirpans are allowed to be worn inside Villa Park – however it must not be visible to the public and should be worn underneath clothes in order to ensure the highest possible safety at all times.
- Kirpan will be permitted only when the other 4 religious articles are worn correctly and the Kirpan is sheathed and secured
- The blade length can be up to 3 inches and the full length with the sheath should not exceed 6 inches, but smaller kirpans are preferable.
- Sikhs wearing Kirpans are encouraged to declare it and undergo security searches in line with the stadium search policy.
- Staff are made aware of religious attire on a regular basis as part of their training.

- Aston Villa will work with the Premier League and The FA who have a Faith and Football Network, with representatives of all major faiths whom we consult with on a regular basis on matters of faith and football. We are open for further discussion with religious groups regarding religious attire should they wish to raise any issues or concerns.
- If the kirpan is ever drawn or made visible, then the individual will be asked to leave, and a decision will be made regarding a stadium ban.