



# Student Physical Search Policy

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## Revision History

Version	Date	Reason for most Recent Revision
v1.0	November 2023	New Policy
v1.1	October 2024	Minor updates to provide further clarification of the process



# STUDENT PHYSICAL SEARCH POLICY

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## 1 Rationale

Ensuring school staff and students feel safe and secure is vital to establishing calm and supporting environments conducive to learning. Searching and confiscation are important tools that can be used to ensure student and staff welfare.

Where the School has a serious safeguarding concern or where there is a concern that a student may be in possession of items contrary to the School's Behaviour Policy, staff are allowed to conduct a physical search of the student in accordance with the procedures mentioned in this policy.

This policy has been updated to reflect the increased use of CCTV and Vape Sensors in the Senior School. As staff now have a greater wealth of evidence to support suspected prohibited behaviours, there is an increased need to have clear guidelines on searching students to ensure student wellbeing and safety in school.

## 2 UK Legal Context

As a BSO school, we observe [UK guidelines/policy](#) alongside national law. UK law states:

*School staff can search a student for any item if they agree. The Principals/Head Teachers and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search students or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting a student may have a prohibited item.*

Prohibited items include:

- Weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco / Vape products or similar
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- anything that has been, or is likely to be, used to cause injury or commit an offence
- anything banned in the school rules

The Principal, Head Teachers and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for.

## 3 Procedures for searching a student

All student physical searches shall be conducted in an appropriate and proportionate manner which safeguards the welfare of all students and staff.



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Staff authorised to conduct a physical search of a student shall be provided with appropriate training and guidance on how to conduct searches in appropriate and proportionate manners.

Where any evidence or allegation suggests a student may be in the possession of a prohibited item, the Principal, Head Teacher or authorised staff will:

- Before any search is conducted, the authorised member of staff should explain to the student why he / she is being searched, how and where the search is going to take place and give them the opportunity to ask any questions
- Accompany the student into a private space/room within the school to conduct a search, except where an immediate search is necessary to prevent evidence from being concealed, discarded or destroyed
- The search will be conducted by a member of staff of the same gender as the student except in situations where there is a serious concern that serious harm will be caused if the search is not conducted immediately
- Two members of staff will be present for the search, one of whom must be a senior leader. Both members of staff should preferably be of the same gender as the student
- Parent permission is not required for the search to proceed
- The student's possessions<sup>1</sup> may be searched by a Senior Leader/authorised member of staff including bag, locker, laptop, mobile device, phone or any other electronic device (as per the mobile device and online safety policy)
- The student may be asked to 'turn-out' their pockets, remove outer clothing (clothing that is on top of the layer of clothing next to the skin) and shoes
- If the student refuses to comply, parents will be called and appropriate sanctions applied as per the behaviour policy
- In the event of a student refusing to comply, and there are reasonable grounds to suspect the student may be in possession of an illegal item, the police may be called.

## 4 Confiscation of Items

Where a prohibited item has been discovered the following action may be taken:

- The school may confiscate the item;
- The school may seize the item and destroy it;
- The school may return the item to the parents;
- In more serious cases, illegal items that may have been involved in a crime may be passed to the police
- The student shall be sanctioned in line with the School's Behaviour Policy ([Senior](#), [Infant & Junior](#)).

<sup>1</sup> Possessions means any items over which the student has or appears to have control - this includes desks, lockers, bags, etc.



## 5 After search / confiscation

The School recognises that the process of searching and confiscation may be distressing for the concerned student. The School will provide the affected student with pastoral and counselling support as required during and / or after the search / confiscation process to ensure the well-being of the student.

## 6 Recording searches

Any search by a member of staff for a prohibited item (as defined in Section 2 above) shall be recorded in iSams, including whether or not an item is found. The following shall be included in the record of each search:

- The date, time and location of the search;
- Concerned student(s) name(s);
- Names of the staff members who conducted the search and any other staff members who were present during the search;
- What was being searched for;
- The reason for searching;
- What items, if any, were found;
- What follow-up action was taken as a consequence of the search.

## 7 Informing parents

Parent permission is not required for the search to proceed. However, after a search has been conducted, the parents of concerned students shall be informed about the search and the outcome of the search as soon as is practicable. Parents shall also be informed if any item has been confiscated and the resulting action the school has taken, including any behavioural sanctions applied.