

## **Searching, Screening and Confiscation Guidelines at Copley Academy**

These guidelines should be used alongside the Dfe Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools July 2022

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1091132/Searching\\_Screening\\_and\\_Confiscation\\_guidance\\_July\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1091132/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf)

### **Rationale:**

Using searching, screening and confiscation powers appropriately is an important way to ensure student and staff welfare is protected and helps schools establish an environment where everyone is safe.

Before screening or conducting a search of a student, it is vital that schools consider their obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. Under Article 8, students have a right to respect for their private life. In the context of these rights and obligations, this means that students have the right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy.

### **Copley Academy**

The SLT, LPSOs and Pastoral Team have the statutory power to search a student or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the student may have a prohibited item.

Prohibited Items:

- Knives and Weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs and associated paraphernalia
- Stolen Items
- Any item that the staff member reasonably suspects has been used or is likely to be used to commit an offence or cause personal injury to, or damage property of any person (including the student)
- Tobacco, vapes and associated paraphernalia
- Fireworks
- Pornographic Images

### **Before Searching: Aim to preserve a student's dignity at all times**

Consider the age and needs of the student. This includes the individual needs or learning difficulties of students with SEN and making reasonable adjustments that may be required if a student has a disability.

The member of staff should make an assessment of how urgent the need for a search is and should consider the risk to other students and staff.

The member of staff should always explain to the student why they are being searched, how and where the search is going to take place and give them the opportunity to ask any questions.

The member of staff should always seek the co-operation of the student. If the student is not willing to co-operate with the search the member of staff should consider why the student has refused. Reasons might include that they are in possession of a prohibited item, do not understand the instruction, are unaware of what a search may involve, have had a previous distressing experience of being searched.

If the student continues to refuse the member of staff should place the student in isolation and make contact with parents/carers. The student should be supervised at all times.

**During a search:**

An appropriate location should be found away from other students, for example an SLT or LPSO office that is not in public view and it must take place on school premises.

The law states that the member of staff conducting the search must be of the same sex as the student being searched. There must be another member of staff present as a witness to the search. This only exception to this is if the member of staff believes that there is a risk of harm if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency.

**Extent of a search:**

Member of staff may search a student's outer clothing, pockets, possessions or desk.

The Member of staff must not require the student to remove any clothing other than outer clothing. Outer clothing means any item of clothing that is not worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear, as well as hats, shoes, boots or scarves. Students should remove these items themselves.

The power to search does not enable the member of staff to conduct a strip search. Strip searches on school premises can only be carried out by police officers.

The decision to call the police in to assist with a search can only be made by the Principal.

**After a search:**

If a student is found in possession of a weapon, illegal drugs or alcohol this should be reported to the Duty Manager.

If a student is found in possession of vapes, tobacco etc refer to the Behaviour Policy. These items should not be returned to the student.

**Recording Searches:**

All searches must be recorded on CPOMS under the Search category and the record must include the following information:

- Date, time and location of the search
- Who conducted the search and who was the witness
- Item being searched for and the reason for the search
- What items if any were found
- Follow up action taken as a consequence of the search

At each half term the DSL will run a report to analyse if searching is falling disproportionately on any particular groups of students.

**Informing Parents:**

Parents should always be informed of any search and the outcome as soon as is practicable. The Member of staff should inform what, if anything, has been confiscated and the resulting action the school has taken, including any sanctions applied.