

NEWPORT GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST



SEARCHING, SCREENING AND CONFISCATION POLICY

Policy written by:	Mrs H Birch
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Newport Girls' High School recognises its duty under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (Section 157 for academies) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This policy reflects current statutory guidance including **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)**, the Department for Education's **Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools**, and the school's Behaviour Policy. The school will make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Searching

The Headteacher and staff authorised by the Headteacher have a statutory power to search students and their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student may have a prohibited item.

Statutory prohibited items

- knives or offensive weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco products, cigarettes, vapes and smoking paraphernalia
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article reasonably suspected to have been used (or likely to be used) to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property
- psychoactive substances and other illegal or harmful substances

Items prohibited by school rules

- Mobile phones
- Smart watches
- Earbuds/headphones
- Other personal electronic devices
- Energy drinks
- Laser pens

The Headteacher and staff authorised by the Headteacher can also search for any item banned by the school rules which has been identified as an item which may be searched for. This would be anything that falls into the school's behaviour policy.

Confiscation

- School staff can seize any prohibited items found as a result of a search. Confiscated items will be retained, returned or disposed of in accordance with DfE guidance and the school's Behaviour Policy.
- When deciding on what to do with any confiscated items, staff will follow the guidance set out in the searching, screening and confiscation document by the DfE.

Searching with consent

Staff may ask pupils to voluntarily empty pockets, open bags or hand over items. Where pupils cooperate, this does not constitute a statutory search. Refusal to cooperate may result in a search where legal powers apply and/or disciplinary action in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

Searching without consent

The Headteacher, and members of staff authorised by the Headteacher, have the legal power to search a pupil or their possessions without consent where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil is carrying a prohibited item or an item banned under the school's Behaviour Policy.

- Wherever practicable, searches will be carried out by a member of staff of the same sex as the pupil and witnessed by another member of staff. Exceptions permitted by legislation may apply where there is a risk of serious harm or where it is not reasonably practicable to comply.
- There is a limited exception to this rule. Authorised school staff can carry out a search of a student of the opposite sex to themselves and / or without a witness present, but only where the school reasonably believe that there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if you do not conduct the search immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff. The member of staff conducting the search will bear in mind that a student's expectation of privacy increases as they get older.
- The powers allow school staff to search regardless of whether the student is found after the search to have that item. This includes circumstances where staff suspect a student of having items such as illegal drugs or stolen property which are later found not to be illegal or stolen.
- CCTV footage may be reviewed where appropriate to help establish reasonable grounds for a search or as part of a subsequent investigation.
- Searches without consent can only be carried out on the school premises or, if elsewhere, where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the students, for example on school trips or in training settings.

During the search

Searches will be conducted respectfully, proportionately and with consideration for the pupil's age, SEND needs, vulnerabilities and any safeguarding concerns. Staff will follow current DfE guidance throughout.

Statutory guidance for dealing with electronic devices

- If school staff conducting the search find an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules or that they reasonably suspect has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property, they may examine any data or files on the device where there is a good reason to do so. They may also delete data or files if they think there is a good reason to do so, unless they are going to give the device to the police.
- This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone if it has been seized in a lawful 'without consent' search and is prohibited by the school rules.
- School staff must regard the guidance issued by the Secretary of State when determining what is a 'good reason' for examining or erasing the contents of an electronic device.
- School staff should reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm, to disrupt teaching or to go against the school's behaviour policy.
- If inappropriate content is found on the device school staff will decide whether content needs to be deleted or retained as evidence and given to the police. This would be in relation to a possible offence being committed, or pornographic images of a child or extreme pornographic image existing.

Lockers

- Under common law powers, schools are able to search lockers and desks for any item provided the student agrees.
- Schools can also make it a condition of having a locker that the student consents to have these searched for any item whether or not the student is present.

- If a pupil refuses to consent to a search, staff may still conduct a lawful search without consent where the legal threshold is met.

Use of force

- Reasonable force may be used only where lawful, proportionate and necessary. Staff should refer to the school's Use of Reasonable Force Policy.

Informing Parents

- There is no requirement for the school to inform parents before a search
- Parents will normally be informed where prohibited items are found or where safeguarding concerns arise unless doing so would place a child at greater risk..
- If a parent makes a complaint, the normal procedures for dealing with a complaint should be followed.

Sanctions

Any prohibited or banned item discovered during a search will be dealt with in accordance with the Behaviour Policy. This may include confiscation, behaviour sanctions, parental contact, referral to external agencies and/or police involvement where appropriate.

Recording Incidents

The school will record searches where appropriate, particularly where prohibited items are found, force is used, or safeguarding concerns arise. Parents will normally be informed where prohibited items have been found or where this is considered appropriate.

Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Online Safety Policy