

Edmund de Moundeford VC Primary School

Screening, Searching and Confiscation Policy

(Cross reference with behaviour policy and complaints procedure).

Aims and objectives

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff, governors, parents and children are provided with guidance on 'Screening, Searching and Confiscation'. The policy follows the guidance for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Body on Screening, Searching and Confiscation by Department for Education.

PART ONE: Screening

The school does not routinely screen pupils or visitors as they enter the school.

PART TWO: Searching

Items which should not be brought into school

Banned items:

- Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones or other expensive electrical items into school. However, in extenuating circumstances, mobile phones or electrical items might be able to be left in the school office if a parent requests, at the heads discretion. However, the school is not responsible for them.
- Children are not allowed to bring toys into school unless they are for show and tell. If so they must be given to their class teacher at the beginning of the day. Parents are informed of show and tell days.

In terms of more serious items which must not be brought into school, in our school we would interpret prohibited items to include:

- knives,
- weapons,
- alcohol,
- illegal drugs,
- stolen items.
- This includes items suspected to be used, or likely to be used, to commit an offence or cause injury or damage.
- or items such as the above.

Searching with consent:

School staff can search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees to this. Staff members should ensure the pupil *understands the reason for the search and how it will be conducted so that their agreement is informed.*

Searching without consent:

Staff can search a pupil where there is 'reasonable grounds' to believe the pupil has a prohibited or banned item, such as a knife. In our school we would interpret prohibited or banned items to include knives, weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items. This includes items suspected to be used, or likely to be used, to commit an offence or cause injury or damage.

The staff member searching must ideally be of the same sex as the pupil and the search must take place in the presence of a witness (the only exception being where there is a risk that serious harm will be caused if a search is not conducted immediately).

The search

In our school all members of staff (except supply staff) are entitled to search a child for a prohibited or banned item. Searches can take place on the school premises or on a school trip (where staff have lawful control or charge of the pupil). There must be a witness (another member of staff).

During the search the person conducting the search may ask the pupil to remove outer clothing (hats, gloves, scarves, boots) and for the child to empty their pockets. In our school if we do not need to physically touch the child to search them, for example, by searching their school bag, we would not require the member of staff to be of the same sex.

Staff must not intentionally look at nude or semi-nude images, or copy, print, share, store or save such images. Instead these must be referred immediately to the DSL (or deputy DSL). The DSL (or Deputy DSL) must be informed without delay whenever a search is conducted for a prohibited item, and/or where the circumstances surrounding a proposed search suggest that there may be a safeguarding risk, with a referral being made to Children's Social Care Services immediately where there is a risk of harm to any person (not necessarily the pupil being searched).

Reasonable force can only be used to search for items prohibited by law, not items banned by the school.

Confiscation:

Staff can use their discretion to confiscate, retain and/or destroy any item found, as long as this is reasonable in the circumstances.

Weapons, knives and drugs must be passed to the police as soon as possible. Stolen items (of high value) must be delivered to the police or returned to the owner. Alcohol must be disposed of. Being found in possession of certain prohibited items may raise concerns that the pupil is, or is at risk of, being

involved in criminal behaviour. Other agencies will therefore be contacted if needed.

Informing parents:

Schools do not have to notify parents before a search takes place, therefore we will not so.

Record keeping

Schools should keep a record of all searches for prohibited items and/or searches conducted by the police in their safeguarding reporting system, whether or not an item is found.

Equal opportunities

We will aim to take into account the age and needs of pupils being searched, including any special educational needs (SEND) and/or disabilities (including behavioural disabilities) and try to make an adjustment, where needed, to avoid particular/substantial disadvantage.

Complaints:

Complaints will be dealt with through the normal complaints procedure.