



HOPEBRIGHT
S C H O O L

Searching, Screening And Confiscation Policy

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Searching
3. Use of force
4. Screening
5. Confiscation
6. Bag searches
7. Personal searches
8. Risk assessments and behaviour support plans
9. Use of disciplinary sanctions
10. Seeking the views of pupils, parents, carers and staff
11. Safeguarding and child protection
12. Police involvement
13. Complaints
14. Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review

Appendix

1. Confiscating, retaining, destroying or delivering items to the police

SEARCHING, SCREENING AND CONFISCATION POLICY

Hopebright School Bolton is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff to act in the best interests of pupils at all times.

1. Introduction

Hopebright School Bolton recognises its duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to establish and maintain a behaviour policy that promotes self-discipline, respect for others and proper regard for authority, and to ensure that all functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in accordance with the Education Act 2002.

The school complies with the Independent School Standards Regulations and has regard to the Department for Education (DfE) guidance *Searching, Screening and Confiscation* (latest edition).

Hopebright School Bolton acknowledges the obligations associated with:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Relevant Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and guidance

The school will take immediate action where it believes a pupil or member of the school community may be at risk of harm or where safeguarding concerns are identified.

The welfare and safety of pupils, staff, visitors and the wider school community remain the school's primary concern at all times.

This policy applies to all staff including:

- teachers
- support staff
- volunteers
- agency staff
- contractors
- students on placement
- visitors
- any individual working for or on behalf of Hopebright School Bolton

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Policy
- Online Safety and Multi-Media Policy

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- Safe Working Practice Policy (Code of Conduct)
- Exclusion Policy
- Complaints Policy

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

2. Searching

Under DfE guidance, school staff may search a pupil for any item if the pupil agrees.

Formal written consent is not required. Consent may include:

- agreeing to empty pockets
- opening a bag
- allowing staff to inspect belongings

The Head Teacher and authorised staff also have the statutory power to search pupils or possessions without consent where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting the pupil may possess a prohibited item.

Prohibited items include:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- vapes and e-cigarettes
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article likely to be used:
 - to commit an offence
 - to cause personal injury
 - to damage property

The school may also search for items banned under school rules including:

- drug paraphernalia
- lighters or matches
- mobile phones used in breach of school rules
- laser pens
- energy drinks

- any item deemed unsafe or disruptive

Searches without consent will only be used where necessary and proportionate.

Staff should, wherever possible:

1. speak to the pupil first
2. request surrender of the item
3. seek consent for a search
4. only proceed to a non-consensual search where justified and lawful

3. Use of force

Reasonable force may be used where lawful and proportionate when conducting a search for prohibited items.

Force must only be used where necessary to prevent:

- injury
- harm
- serious disorder
- damage to property

Force cannot be used solely to search for items banned under school rules.

Where staff suspect a pupil may possess a weapon, sharp object, illegal substance or other dangerous item, the Head Teacher will decide whether police involvement is required before any search takes place.

All incidents involving force must be recorded and reviewed in accordance with the Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy.

4. Screening

Schools may require pupils to undergo screening using walk-through or hand-held metal detectors even where there is no specific suspicion.

Hopebright School Bolton does not routinely use metal detectors or screening equipment.

Should screening equipment ever be introduced, the school will ensure its use is proportionate, lawful and respectful of pupils' dignity and wellbeing.

5. Confiscation

Staff may confiscate any prohibited item found during a search.

Staff may also confiscate any item considered harmful, unsafe or detrimental to:

- safety
- wellbeing
- learning
- behaviour

- school discipline

Further guidance regarding confiscation, retention, disposal or police involvement is provided in Appendix 1.

6. Bag searches

Bag searches will only be carried out where there is reasonable cause to believe that:

- prohibited or banned items are present
- stolen property is concealed
- there is a risk to safety or welfare

Expectations for bag searches

- A bag must not be searched without reasonable grounds.
- Searches must be authorised by a senior member of staff.
- Searches should normally take place with the pupil present.
- Staff should seek the pupil's cooperation wherever possible.
- Searches must be conducted respectfully and sensitively.

Two staff members should normally be present during a search.

Where possible:

- the staff member conducting the search should be the same sex as the pupil
- the witness should also be the same sex

All searches must be recorded within 24 hours including:

- date and time
- reason for search
- staff involved
- pupil present
- items found
- action taken
- whether parents/carers were informed

Parents/carers will normally be informed within 24 hours unless doing so would place a pupil at risk of harm.

7. Personal searches

Personal searches are limited to:

- outer clothing
- pockets
- bags and possessions

Staff must not conduct intimate searches under any circumstances.

Where a pupil is believed to possess a dangerous or illegal item concealed beneath clothing, police involvement must be considered immediately.

Expectations for personal searches

- Reasonable grounds must exist.
- Searches must be authorised by a senior leader.
- Searches should be carried out with dignity and sensitivity.
- Two staff members must be present.
- Staff should seek cooperation wherever possible.

Reasonable force must not be used solely to facilitate a search for non-prohibited items.

All personal searches must be fully recorded and reported in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

8. Risk assessments and behaviour support plans

Search-related incidents and concerns may inform:

- individual risk assessments
- behaviour support plans
- safeguarding plans

Where pupils present ongoing risks associated with prohibited items, the school may consult with:

- parents/carers
- local authorities
- social care
- CAMHS or health professionals
- police
- safeguarding professionals

Relevant staff will be informed of significant risks on a need-to-know basis.

9. Use of disciplinary sanctions

Possession of prohibited items is considered serious and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

Sanctions may include:

- restorative interventions
- loss of privileges
- internal sanctions
- suspension
- permanent exclusion in serious cases

The school recognises that some behaviour may indicate safeguarding concerns or unmet needs. Support and intervention will therefore be considered alongside sanctions.

10. Seeking the views of pupils, parents, carers and staff

Hopebright School Bolton values the views of pupils, families and staff regarding safety, behaviour and safeguarding practices.

Feedback may be gathered through:

- pupil voice activities
- meetings
- surveys
- safeguarding reviews
- complaints or feedback procedures

The school will use feedback to improve practice and strengthen safeguarding arrangements.

11. Safeguarding and child protection

The school will always consider whether a pupil's behaviour may indicate:

- abuse
- exploitation
- criminal involvement
- mental health concerns
- unmet educational needs
- safeguarding risks

All safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

12. Police involvement

Where behaviour may constitute a criminal offence or present a serious risk to others, the police will be informed.

The school will follow NPCC guidance *When to Call the Police* when making decisions regarding police involvement.

Any decision to involve police will normally be made by the Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

13. Complaints

Pupils, parents/carers, staff and external professionals may raise concerns or complaints regarding the implementation of this policy.

All complaints will be managed in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

Safeguarding allegations or concerns will always be addressed in line with safeguarding procedures.

14. Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review

The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for implementation, monitoring and review of this policy.

The school will ensure that:

- staff receive appropriate training
- pupils understand expectations and procedures
- safeguarding arrangements remain effective
- incidents are monitored and reviewed regularly

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner in response to:

- legislative changes
- safeguarding developments
- serious incidents
- updated statutory guidance

APPENDIX 1

Confiscating, retaining, destroying or delivering items to the police

All decisions regarding confiscation, retention, disposal or police involvement must be made in consultation with the Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

1. Items found during consent searches

Staff may confiscate any item considered harmful, unsafe or disruptive.

Items may be:

- returned to the pupil
- returned to parents/carers
- retained temporarily
- safely disposed of

Weapons must always be handed to the police.

2. Items found during non-consensual searches

Alcohol

Alcohol may be retained or disposed of and must not be returned to pupils.

Controlled drugs

Controlled drugs must normally be delivered to the police unless there is a lawful reason for disposal.

Other substances

Substances suspected to be harmful may be confiscated and disposed of appropriately.

Stolen items

Stolen items should normally be delivered to the police or returned to the rightful owner where appropriate.

Tobacco, vapes and cigarette papers

These may be retained or disposed of and must not be returned to pupils.

Fireworks

Fireworks must not be returned and may be disposed of safely or handed to police.

Pornographic images

Pornographic material may be deleted or disposed of unless it constitutes a criminal offence, in which case police must be informed immediately.

Electronic devices

Staff may examine electronic devices where there is good reason to do so and where permitted by law and safeguarding guidance.

Where evidence of abuse, exploitation or criminal behaviour is suspected, devices may be handed to the police.

All decisions must be:

- proportionate
- lawful
- recorded appropriately
- made in the best interests of safeguarding and safety