Respect Reflection Responsibility Resilience

Green Shoots Partnership

# Searching, Screening and Confiscating Policy

Our Vision

Green Shoots Partnership is a nurturing federation with a strong sense of pride and belonging, with the belief that all have the potential to thrive.

Our Purpose

We exist to cultivate a love of learning by broadening horizons and opening minds to new possibilities. Through our Federation Values, we grow confident individuals who aspire to shape the future.

Meadowside Primary School

Great Doddington Primary School

Last Updated: June 2025

# Searching, Screening and Confiscating Policy

## 1. Introduction

Green Shoots Partnership is committed to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment. To uphold the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff, this policy outlines our procedures for searching, screening, and the confiscation of items that pose a risk or breach school rules.

This policy is informed by the Department for Education's statutory guidance: "Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools" (DfE, July 2022) and should be read alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Relationship and Regulation Policy, and other relevant safeguarding documentation.

## 2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Ensure pupils and staff are safeguarded through clear procedures around searching, screening and confiscation.
- Define legal and procedural frameworks for searching pupils and/or their possessions.
- Outline how staff may seize and confiscate items found during a search.
- Promote safe, respectful, and proportionate approaches to handling prohibited items.

## 3. Legal Context and Staff Powers

- School staff have statutory powers to search pupils or their possessions without consent if they have reasonable grounds to suspect the presence of a prohibited item.
- Staff may also conduct a search with the pupil's consent for any item, whether or not it is prohibited.
- Only authorised staff may carry out searches.

## 4. Prohibited Items

The following items are prohibited in school and may be searched for without consent:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- E-cigarettes or vapes
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Mobile phones (where banned by the school)
- Any item used or likely to be used to:

- Commit an offence,
- Cause personal injury,
- Damage property.

## 5. Authorisation and Oversight

Only the following individuals may conduct or authorise a search:

- Executive Head Teacher
- Head of School
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputies
- Other staff authorised in writing by the Executive Head or Head of School

## 6. Conducting a Search

a) Before the Search

- Staff should always seek pupil cooperation before initiating a search.
- Consider reasons for refusal, including fear, misunderstanding, SEN, or past trauma.
- If a pupil refuses, apply consequences in line with the Behaviour Policy.

b) Search Conditions

- Location: Away from other pupils, ideally in a private area on school premises or on a school-supervised trip.
- Staffing: Conducted by a same-sex staff member, with a second staff member present (except in emergencies).
- Extent of search: Staff may search outer clothing, bags, lockers, or desks. No intimate searches may be carried out

## 7. After the Search

**a) Safeguarding Considerations**

Following a search, staff must assess whether the search revealed any safeguarding concerns (e.g., exploitation, criminal risk, family risk). If so, report immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

**b) Recording**

Searches for prohibited items must be logged in the safeguarding system (e.g., MyConcern), including:

- Date, time, and location
- Names of staff involved
- Reason and item(s) searched for
- Outcome of the search
- Any follow-up actions taken

### c) Informing Parents

Parents should be informed as soon as practicable if a search has occurred, especially if items were confiscated or a sanction was applied.

## 8. Confiscation of Items

Authorised staff may seize and retain or dispose of any item found during a lawful search if they believe it:

- Poses a risk to staff or pupils,
- Is a prohibited item,
- Is evidence in relation to an offence.

### a) Items to be Delivered to Police

- Controlled drugs
- Stolen property (where appropriate)
- Knives, weapons or items used in offences
- Indecent images of children (must not be viewed, copied, or shared under any circumstances)

### b) Items That May Be Disposed of or Retained

- Alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, fireworks
- Pornographic images (if not illegal)
- Items banned by school rules (e.g. mobile phones)

Staff must use professional judgment, considering:

- The item's nature and value
- Whether returning it poses any risk
- If its retention supports safeguarding efforts

## 9. Electronic Devices

Where a device is found during a search, and staff reasonably suspect it contains harmful material:

- Do not access or view content likely to be illegal (e.g. indecent images).
- Confiscate the device and refer the matter immediately to the Executive Head, DSL, or SLT.
- The school will follow DfE guidance and UKCIS protocols on handling and reporting.

Devices may be passed to the police if they contain:

- Evidence of a criminal offence
- Indecent images or abusive content

## 10. Complaints

Any complaints regarding searching, screening, or confiscation must be addressed via the school's complaints policy.

## 11. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in line with DfE guidance and changes to safeguarding legislation