



Progression2Work Screening and Search Policy – July 2020

Revised March 2023, July 2023, Aug 2024 Aug 2025, Aug 2026

This policy is in accordance with Department for Education Guidance July 2022. Through the organisation's ethos of respect, it is usual for pupils to volunteer any items deemed illegal or dangerous if reported to staff. In rare occasions it may be necessary to conduct a search with consent.

Under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998, pupils have a right to respect for their private life, which means they can expect a reasonable level of privacy at school. This right is not absolute, but any interference with it by the school (or other public body) must be justified and proportionate.

Searching with the pupils agreement

A member of school staff may ask a pupil to agree to a search for any item. Before conducting the search the member of staff must explain why the search is being requested, what is being searched for and how the search will be conducted. The member of staff must be satisfied that the pupil understands this information and that their agreement is informed.

The pupil may withdraw their agreement at any time. If the pupil does not agree or withdraws their agreement the search must not continue unless the headteacher or an authorised member of staff has lawful grounds to conduct the search without the pupils agreement.

Searching without pupils agreement

Only the headteacher or a member of staff specifically authorised by the headteacher may conduct the search without the pupils agreement.

The authorised member of staff must have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil possesses:

- A prohibited item specified in section 550ZA (3) of the education act 1996 or
- Another item which is expressly identified in Progression 2Works behaviour policy and school rules as a item for which a search may be conducted

Reasonable grounds must be based on relevant information, observations or circumstances. A search must not be based solely on a pupils protected characteristics, SEND, disability, previous behaviour or a member of a particular group.

The headteacher will maintain a record of the staff authorised to conduct searches without agreement and will ensure those staff have received appropriate information and training.



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Authorised staff must understand the limits of their powers and the safeguarding, equality and recording and reporting requirements contained in this policy.

If a student is found to be in possession of certain prohibited items this may raise concerns that the pupil is, or is at risk of, being involved in criminal behaviour/gang involvement, invoking the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures as well.

All staff need take into account the age and needs of pupils being searched or screened, including any special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities (including behavioural disabilities) which require us to make an adjustment to avoid particular/substantial disadvantage.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to oversee Progression 2Work's searching practices to safeguard the welfare of pupils and staff (with support from the DSL) and ensure that sufficient numbers of staff are adequately trained.

Screening using a metal detector

The headteacher may introduce routine screening using a walkthrough or handheld metal detector where this is necessary to support the safety of pupils, staff and visitors.

Screening is the use of a metal detector to scan pupils for weapons before they enter the school premises. It does not involve physical contact or searching the pupils clothing or possessions. Routine screening may take place without individual suspicion and without requiring the pupils agreement.

Pupils, parents and carers will be informed in advance that screening takes place, why it is used, what the process involves and how may refusal or alerts will be managed. Screening must be conducted respectfully and consistently by staff who have received appropriate instruction in the use of the equipment. Staff must consider pupils age, SEND, disability, medical needs, religious or cultural requirements. Reasonable adjustments must be made where required. Alternative arrangements must be considered where the screening equipment may interfere with a medical device or otherwise place the student at a disadvantage.

When the detector alerts, Staff must explain this to the pupil and seek their cooperation in establishing the reason. An alert does not, By itself permit staff to exceed the search powers set out in this policy. Any subsequent search must be conducted by the headteacher or an authorised member of staff and must comply with the requirements for searching with or without the pupils agreement.

Where a pupil refuses to undergo screening staff must consider the reason for refusal including whether it arises from SEND, Disability, communication needs, anxiety or a previous

distressing experience. Reasonable force must not be used solely to make a pupil undergo screening.

The pupil should be appropriately supervised while advice is obtained by the head teacher, head of school, DSL or a member of SLT. Staff must assess whether there are reasonable grounds for a lawful search and whether any safeguarding response is required. A refusal may be addressed under the behaviour policy where it is reasonable and proportionate to do so.

Routine screening does not need to be individually recorded unless the pupil refuses, the detector alerts, a subsequent search takes place or the circumstances give rise to a safeguarding concern. Any subsequent search must be recorded in line with this policy.

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).

All staff must consider in advance how urgent the search is and, where it is not urgent (and therefore does not need to be done then and there) seek advice from the Headteacher, DSL or deputy DSL before conducting the search. Staff should also seek the co-operation of the pupil in advance of the search and consider the reasons why this may not be forthcoming.

Refusal to cooperate and use of reasonable force

If a pupil refuses to cooperate with a search, staff must not move immediately to the use of force. The authorised member of staff must consider the reason for the refusal, including whether the pupil does not understand what is being asked, has SEND or communication needs, is anxious or distressed, or has previously experienced a distressing search.

The member of staff must explain why the search is considered necessary, how it will be conducted and what will happen if the pupil continues to refuse. Where the search is not urgent, the pupil should be appropriately supervised and kept away from other pupils while advice is obtained from the Headteacher, DSL or a deputy DSL.

A refusal may be addressed through Progression 2Work's Behaviour Policy where it is reasonable and proportionate to do so.

Only the Headteacher or a member of staff authorised by the Headteacher may use reasonable force to conduct a search. Reasonable force may only be used where:

- there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupil possesses an item prohibited under section 550ZA(3) of the Education Act 1996;

- the search is necessary in the circumstances; and
- the force used is reasonable, proportionate and no more than is necessary for the shortest possible time.

Reasonable force must not be used to search solely for an item banned under the school rules, such as a mobile phone or vape, unless the item also falls within one of the statutory prohibited-item categories. Force must never be used as a punishment.

Staff must have regard to the pupil's age, SEND, disability, communication needs, medical needs, individual risk assessment and any known vulnerabilities. Wherever practicable, preventative and de-escalation strategies must be attempted before force is used.

Every use of force connected with a search must be recorded in accordance with Progression 2Work's Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy. Any significant use-of-force incident must be recorded in writing as soon as practicable, normally on the same day, in accordance with *Restrictive Interventions, Including the Use of Reasonable Force, in Schools* (April 2026).

Parents or carers must be informed in writing as soon as practicable, normally on the same day. Where notifying a particular parent would be likely to result in significant harm to the pupil, information must be provided to another parent where this can be done safely or, where there is no parent who can safely be informed, to the local authority in which the pupil ordinarily resides.

The pupil and any staff involved must be offered appropriate medical attention and post-incident support. Any safeguarding concern arising from the incident must be referred immediately to the DSL or a deputy DSL.

The law outlines what can be searched for: 1) Knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items; and 2) Tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks and pornographic images; and 3) Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to property; and 4) Any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for.

Location and conduct of a search

A search may only take place on Progression 2Work premises or at a location where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, such as during outreach provision, an educational visit, work experience or school transport.

An appropriate and private location must be used wherever possible. The search should take place away from other pupils and must be conducted respectfully, with proper regard for the pupil's dignity, privacy and individual needs.

The authorised member of staff conducting the search must be of the same sex as the pupil, and another member of staff must be present as a witness.

A search may be conducted by a member of staff of the opposite sex and/or without a witness only where:

- the member of staff reasonably believes that there is a risk of serious harm to a person if the search is not conducted immediately; and
- it is not reasonably practicable, in the time available, to summon a member of staff of the same sex or another member of staff to act as a witness.

Where this exception is used, the member of staff must immediately report the circumstances to the Headteacher and DSL or deputy DSL. The reasons for departing from the normal requirements must be fully recorded.

Staff must act sensitively where outer clothing is worn for religious, cultural or medical reasons and must consider whether reasonable adjustments are required because of SEND, disability, communication needs, trauma or previous experiences.

Extent of a search

A member of staff may search only:

- the pupil's outer clothing and pockets;
- possessions over which the pupil has or appears to have control, including bags;
- desks, lockers and other personal spaces used by the pupil.

Staff must not require a pupil to remove any clothing other than outer clothing. Outer clothing means clothing that is not worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over underwear and includes coats, jackets, hats, shoes, boots, gloves and scarves.

Staff must not conduct an intimate or strip search, make physical contact with intimate areas of the pupil's body, or require the pupil to expose any part of their body that would ordinarily be covered by underwear.

A search of a pupil's possessions must normally take place in the presence of the pupil and another member of staff. The pupil's possessions may only be searched without the pupil or a witness present where there is a risk of serious harm if the search is not conducted immediately and it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff. Any use of this exception must be reported and recorded.

Progression 2Work may make it a condition of providing a desk, locker or other personal space that the pupil agrees to it being searched. If the pupil withdraws their agreement, the space may still be searched for statutory prohibited items and for items expressly identified in the Behaviour Policy and school rules as items for which a search may be conducted.

Extent of any search clothes, possessions and lockers.

Outer clothing' means clothing that is not worn next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear, but 'outer clothing' includes hats; shoes; boots; gloves and scarves.

Possessions' means any goods over which the pupil has or appears to have control – this includes desks, lockers and bags.

If a pupil is given a locker or other personal space in school that the pupil must agree to these being searched. If the pupil withdraws their consent, a search can still be made for prohibited items and items banned by Progression 2Work in our Behaviour Policy.

A pupil's possessions can only be searched in the presence of the pupil and another member of staff, except where there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not conducted immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff.

Where they find stolen items, these must be delivered to the police as soon as reasonably practicable – but may be returned to the owner (or may be retained or disposed of if returning them to their owner is not practicable) if the person thinks that there is a good reason to do so.

Where a member of staff finds tobacco or cigarette papers they may retain or dispose of them. As with alcohol, this means that schools can dispose of tobacco or cigarette papers as they think appropriate, but this should not include returning them to the pupil.

Fireworks found as a result of a search may be retained or disposed of but should not be returned to the pupil.

When examining mobile phones and other electronic devices, staff must not intentionally look at nude or semi-nude images, or copy, print, share, store or save such images. These must be referred to the DSL.

If a member of staff finds an adult pornography image, on paper or on an electronic device, this must be referred to the DSL. If pornography is found that constitutes a specified offence (i.e. it is extreme pornography and/or an indecent image of a child) it must be seized, and the police contacted as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Where an article that has been (or could be) used to commit an offence or to cause personal injury or damage to property is found it may be delivered to the police or returned to the owner. It may also be retained or disposed of.

Where a member of staff finds an item which is banned under the school rules they should take into account all relevant circumstances and use their professional judgement to decide whether to return it to its owner, retain it or dispose of it.

Any weapons or items which are evidence of an offence must be passed to the police as soon as possible.

Strip Searches

Progression 2Work staff must never conduct a strip search. A strip search is a search involving the removal of more than outer clothing. Such a search may only be conducted by the police in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the applicable PACE Codes of Practice.

Except in an emergency involving an immediate risk of serious harm, the decision to involve the police where a strip search may result should normally be made by the Headteacher or a member of SLT in consultation with the DSL or a deputy DSL.

Before involving the police, the school must:

- assess the risk that a strip search may present to the pupil's physical and emotional wellbeing;
- balance that risk against the risk of not recovering the suspected item;
- consider whether police involvement and the possibility of a strip search are absolutely necessary;
- ensure that appropriate, less intrusive alternatives have been considered or exhausted; and
- take account of the pupil's age, SEND, disability, communication needs, previous experiences and known safeguarding vulnerabilities.

Once the police are on the premises, the decision whether to conduct a strip search is a matter for the police. However, Progression 2Work continues to owe the pupil a duty of care and must advocate for their safety, dignity and wellbeing throughout the process. The DSL or a deputy DSL must remain involved.

Unless there is an immediate risk of serious harm, parents or carers should be informed before a suspected strip search takes place wherever reasonably possible. A parent who wishes to act as the appropriate adult should be enabled to do so where possible. Where the pupil is under 18, the police must comply with the requirements concerning the presence of an appropriate adult.

Police officers conducting a strip search involving exposure of intimate body parts must be of the same sex as the pupil. The search must take place in private and must not be visible to anyone not permitted to be present under the applicable PACE safeguards.

Parents or carers must always be informed by the school after a strip search has taken place. The strip search must be recorded on CPOMS, including:

- the reasons for involving the police;
- the alternatives considered before police involvement;
- who authorised or requested police involvement;
- the people present;
- whether anything was found;
- any safeguarding action taken; and
- the support provided to the pupil.

The pupil must be offered appropriate safeguarding, pastoral and medical support following a strip search, regardless of whether the suspected item was found. The pupil must be given an opportunity to express their views about the search and the events surrounding it.

The DSL must monitor strip-search records for patterns, including repeated searches involving an individual pupil or any disproportionate impact on pupils who share protected characteristics, have SEND or have other vulnerabilities.

Electronic devices.

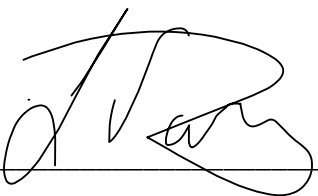
Where the person conducting the search finds an electronic device, they may examine any data or files on the device if they think there is a good reason to do so. Following an examination, if the person has decided to return the device to the owner, or to retain or dispose of it, they may erase any data or files, if they think there is a good reason to do so.

In determining a 'good reason' to examine or erase the data or files the staff member must 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 break the school rules.

Telling parents, dealing with complaints, and completing Search Logs

- 1) Schools are not required to inform parents before a search takes place or to seek their consent to search their child.
- 2) Upon completion of any search the Progression 2Work Screen and Search Log must be completed.
- 3) Schools should inform the commissioning schools, individual pupil's parents or guardians where alcohol, illegal drugs or potentially harmful substances are found, though there is no legal requirement to do so.
- 4) Complaints about screening or searching should be dealt with through the normal school complaints procedure.



Signed:  _____ Director Dated: 30 Jan 21



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