OVERSTONE PARK SCHOOL

Searching, Screening & Confiscation Policy

Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Date	Review Date	Coordinator
September 2025	August 2026	Mrs M Brown Mrs D York Miss A West Ms V Brown Ms K Gorton

We believe this policy relates to the following legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Education Act 1996
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010
- Equality Act 2010
- Schools (Specification and Disposal of Articles) Regulations 2012
- School Behaviour (Determination and Publicising of Measures in Academies) Regulations 2012

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Use of Reasonable Force – advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (DfE)
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools – advice for head teachers and school staff (DfE)
- Information Commissioner for advice on the Data Protection Act (DfE)
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (DfE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children

We recognise our responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and will take all reasonably practicable steps to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions (on the school premises and during school-sponsored activities), equipment and systems of work for all our pupils, school personnel and visitors to the school.

We understand that 'Headteachers and school personnel authorised by them have the statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item'.

We have decided that the following items are prohibited in this school namelyknives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images, mobile phonesand any items that could be used to commit an offence or personal injury or damage to property.

We understand that we can seize any prohibited item that we consider is 'harmful or detrimental to school discipline'. We will inform and hand to the Police certain prohibited items.

We wish to work closely with the School Council and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

- To provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions (on the school premises and during school-sponsored activities), equipment and systems of work for all our pupils, school personnel and visitors to the school.
- To have in place school personnel authorised to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may be in possession of a prohibited item.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.
- To work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Principal

The Principal will:

- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- ask for school personnel volunteers to be designated school personnel authorised by the Principal to undertake a search;
- ensure authorised designated school personnel attend appropriate training to search pupils for prohibited items;
- ensure that in any search the designated person will be the same sex as the pupil being searched;
- be aware that in exceptional circumstances an immediate search of a pupil will take place without a witness present when it is believed that serious harm to another person is imminent;
- inform a child's parents/carers if prohibited items have been found in their child's possession;
- deal with any complaints regarding searching and the confiscation of any prohibited item;
- keep records of all searches and confiscated items;
- will return certain confiscated items to parents;
- work closely with the designated school personnel and link governor;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- provide guidance, support and awareness training to all school personnel;

- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by speaking with pupils, school personnel, parents and governors;
- annually report on the success and development of this policy.

Role of Designated School Personnel

Designated school personnel will:

- undertake appropriate training in search procedures;
- undertake a search without consent if they have sufficient grounds for suspicion that a pupil has in his/her possession a prohibited item or is behaving in a suspicious manner;
- ensure that in any search the designated person and witness will be the same sex as the pupil being searched;
- conduct an immediate search of a pupil without a witness being present if it is considered that serious harm to another person is potentially imminent;
- ensure all searches are witnessed by another member of the school personnel or by another designated person;
- ensure a search does not take place in full view of other pupils but in an appropriate private room with a witness or witnesses present;
- consider studying CCTV footage before deciding whether to conduct a search;
- not request under any circumstance the pupil to remove any 'next to the skin' clothing other than, if need be, their outer clothing such as hats, shoes, boots, gloves or scarves;
- have the authority to search a pupil's desk, locker or bag in the presence of the pupil and a member of the school personnel
- have the authority to search a pupil's desk, locker or bag without the presence of the pupil or witness if it is considered that there is a serious risk of immediate harm to another person;
- confiscate all prohibited items after a search has taken place;
- be reassured that if they have acted lawfully when confiscating a prohibited item that no complaint or other action can be taken against them;
- report to the Principalin the first instance and then to the police the following:

  - ☐ illegal drugs and other substances
  - ☐ stolen items
  - ☐ child pornography
  - ☐ knives or weapons
  - ☐ weapons or items which are evidence of an offence
  - ☐ any item that could be used to commit an offence or personal injury or damage to property
  - ☐ electronics devices containing inappropriate material
  - ☐ mobile phones

- work closely with the Principal;
- keep up to date with new developments and resources;
- annually report to the Principalon the success and development of this policy.

Role of School Personnel

School personnel will be aware that only authorised designated school personnel will conduct a search.

Role of Pupils

Pupils will be aware of the disciplinary sanctions if they are found to be in possession of any prohibited item.

Role of the School Council

The School Council will be involved in:

- determining this policy;
- discussing improvements to this policy during the school year;
- organising surveys to gauge the thoughts of all pupils;
- reviewing the effectiveness of this policy.

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will:

- be aware of and comply with this policy for the benefit of their children;
- be aware that the school does not have to inform them if a search takes place or seek their consent to search their child;
- be informed if their child is found to be in possession of any prohibited item;
- be aware of the sanctions that their child may face if their child is found to be in possession of any prohibited item;
- work in partnership with the school;
- be asked to take part in periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

- School Handbook/Prospectus;
- School website;
- Staff Handbook;
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops;
- School events;
- Meetings with school personnel;
- Written communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters;
- Annual report to parents;
- Information displays in the main school entrance;
- Text messages
- Email

- Social media:
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Virtual pin boards
  - School blog

Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on induction which specifically covers:

  - All aspects of this policy
  - Searching techniques and procedures
  - Pupil behaviour and discipline
  - Equal opportunities
  - Inclusion

- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school. (See Initial Equality Impact Assessment).

Headteacher:	**Mrs M F Brown**	**Date:**	**September 2025**