



Screening and Use of Security Wands

Policy (NS-43)

Policy for the prevention, detection and management of prohibited items, including vapes, mobile phones and other unauthorised items

Approved by Governors:	Mr A Rankin, Chair of Governors
Signature:	
Date:	September 2026

Ratified by SLT:	Mr R J King, Headteacher
Signature:	
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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out how the school will use screening, including the use of hand-held security wands, to support a safe, calm and orderly school environment. It explains when and how screening may take place, how prohibited items will be managed, and how the school will ensure that screening is conducted respectfully, consistently and in line with relevant guidance and safeguarding expectations.

The school's approach is intended to prevent pupils bringing prohibited or unauthorised items onto the school site or into examination rooms, reduce disruption to learning, support pupils' health and wellbeing, and protect the integrity of public examinations.

2. LEGAL & GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Exams Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy, and any relevant trust or local authority guidance. It has been developed with regard to Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation in schools and to current JCQ instructions for conducting examinations.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all pupils while on the school site, taking part in school visits or activities, attending alternative provision arranged by the school, or sitting public or internal examinations under school supervision.

Screening may take place at school entrances, within the school site, at specific year-group or pastoral points, before entry to examination rooms, or in other locations where senior staff determine that screening is necessary and proportionate.

4. PROHIBITED AND UNAUTHORISED ITEMS

For the purposes of this policy, prohibited and unauthorised items include items banned by school rules, items that present a risk to safety, wellbeing or good order, and items that may compromise the integrity of an examination:

- Mobile phones, smart watches, headphones, earbuds, tablets or any internet-enabled, communication-enabled or data-storage device, where these are not permitted under school rules or examination regulations.
- Vapes, e-cigarettes, vaping liquids, tobacco and related items.
- Any article that staff reasonably suspect has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, cause injury, damage property, disrupt learning or undermine the safe running of the school.

5. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCREENING AND SEARCHING

Screening is the use of a hand-held detector, including a security wand, to identify whether a pupil may be carrying a metal or electronic item.

Screening does not require physical contact and is different from a search of a pupil or their possessions.

A search involves looking in a pupil's possessions or asking a pupil to remove outer clothing, in line with the school's legal powers and statutory guidance. A security wand may indicate the possible presence of an item, but any subsequent search will be conducted only by staff authorised to do so and in accordance with the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation procedures.

6. GENERAL USE OF SCREENING AND SECURITY WANDS

The school may use screening as a routine or targeted measure to deter and detect prohibited items, including vapes and mobile phones. Screening may be used where there is a reasonable operational need, where intelligence or concerns suggest prohibited items may be present, or as part of a planned whole-school or year-group safety measure:

- Screening will be supervised by a member of the Leadership Team or another member of staff authorised by the headteacher. A list of staff currently trained and authorised to screen pupils using security wands is held by the headteacher and DSL.
- Pupils will be told what is happening, why screening is taking place, and what they are expected to do.
- Screening will be conducted respectfully and without unnecessary delay or embarrassment.
- Staff will avoid physical contact when using a security wand and will not require pupils to remove clothing other than outer clothing where a search is subsequently required.
- Where a wand indicates the possible presence of an item, staff will ask the pupil to identify and hand over the item voluntarily or may follow the school's search procedures if there are reasonable grounds to do so.
- Where concerns relate to safeguarding, criminal exploitation, substance misuse or serious risk, the DSL or a deputy DSL will be informed as soon as practicable.

7. REFUSAL TO COOPERATE WITH SCREENING

Screening itself does not require consent in the same way as a search, but staff will explain the process clearly and seek cooperation wherever possible. If a pupil refuses to cooperate, staff will manage the refusal calmly and proportionately, taking account of safeguarding, equality and examination-integrity considerations.

If a pupil refuses to cooperate with screening, staff will seek to understand the reason for refusal, provide reassurance and give a clear instruction. Where refusal continues, the matter will be escalated.

Where refusal continues, the school may delay or refuse access to particular areas of the school, including an examination room, until the issue has been resolved, where this is necessary to maintain safety, good order or examination integrity.

Refusal to cooperate may be treated as a behaviour matter and managed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. The school will consider any reasonable explanation, disability, medical need, anxiety, trauma history or safeguarding concern before deciding on next steps.

8. CONFISCATION AND DISPOSAL OF ITEMS

Items identified through screening may be confiscated where they are prohibited by school rules, present a risk, are suspected evidence of an offence, or are detrimental to school discipline. Confiscated items will be stored securely and dealt with in accordance with school policy and legal requirements.

Vapes, e-cigarettes, vaping liquids, tobacco and related items will not normally be returned to pupils and may be disposed of safely or handed to parents where appropriate.

Mobile phones and other electronic devices will be managed in line with the school's Mobile Phone Policy and, where relevant, examination regulations.

Illegal items, weapons, suspected controlled substances or items linked to a possible offence will be reported to the police where appropriate.

Parents or carers will normally be informed where a prohibited item is found, where a search has taken place, or where a sanction or safeguarding response is required.

9. SAFEGUARDING, DIGNITY & EQUALITY

The school will ensure that screening is carried out in a way that protects pupils' dignity and respects their individual needs. Staff will be alert to potential safeguarding concerns, including child criminal exploitation, coercion, substance misuse, bullying, peer pressure or vulnerability.

The school will make reasonable adjustments where required for pupils with disabilities, medical devices, anxiety, sensory needs, trauma-related needs or other protected characteristics.

Screening will not be used in a discriminatory way or as a means of targeting pupils unfairly.

Decisions about targeted screening will be based on clear pastoral, safeguarding, behavioural or operational reasons.

10. RECORDING & MONITORING

The school will keep a record on CPOMS each time a pupil is screened. The record will include:

- the date, time and location of the screening;

- the staff involved,
- the reason for screening,
- any item found,
- whether the pupil refused to cooperate;
- whether a search followed screening,
- any sanction issued;
- any safeguarding concern identified, and
- whether parents or carers were informed.

Records of screening, confiscation, searches and safeguarding concerns will be handled in accordance with the school's data protection responsibilities and retained only for as long as required by school policy, safeguarding expectations or examination regulations.

Senior leaders will monitor the use of screening to ensure it is proportionate, effective and consistent. Monitoring will include consideration of patterns by year group, location, type of item found, repeat incidents and any equality or safeguarding concerns.

11. USE OF SECURITY WANDS AS PART OF EXAMS PROCEDURE

The school may use hand-held security wands as part of its examination procedures to prevent candidates from bringing unauthorised items into examination rooms. This is intended to support compliance with current JCQ instructions and to protect candidates from the serious consequences of being found in possession of unauthorised materials during an examination.

11.1 ITEMS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN IN EXAMS

In examinations, unauthorised items include mobile phones, smart watches, watches, earbuds, headphones, tablets, notes, revision materials, data-storage devices, internet-enabled devices, communication-enabled devices and any other item prohibited by JCQ regulations or the awarding body. Possession of such items may constitute malpractice even if the candidate does not intend to use them.

11.2 BEFORE THE EXAMINATION

- Candidates will be reminded before the examination series and before individual examinations that unauthorised items must not be brought into the examination room.
- The school will provide clear arrangements for candidates to hand in or securely store mobile phones and other unauthorised items before entering the examination room.
- JCQ notices and school examination instructions will be displayed or communicated as required.
- Where security wands are used, candidates will be informed that screening may take place before entry to the examination room.

11.3 SCREENING ON ENTRY TO THE EXAMINATION ROOM

Security-wand screening may be carried out before candidates enter an examination room or, where necessary, before they are seated. Screening will be carried out in a calm, orderly and respectful manner so that candidates are not unnecessarily distressed or delayed:

- Screening will normally be overseen by the exams officer, a senior leader, the head of centre, or a member of staff authorised for this purpose.
- Candidates may be asked to empty pockets of permitted items and to remove coats or other outer clothing where this is consistent with examination-room entry procedures and current examination regulations.
- If the wand indicates the presence of a possible electronic or metal item, staff will ask the candidate to identify the item and hand it over before entering the examination room.
- If an unauthorised item is identified before the candidate enters the examination room, it will be removed and stored securely in line with school procedures.
- If there is concern that the candidate may still be in possession of an unauthorised item, the matter will be referred immediately to the exams officer or senior leader before the candidate is allowed to begin the examination.

11.4 ITEMS FOUND AFTER EXAMINATION HAS STARTED

If an unauthorised item is found after the examination has started, the invigilator or member of staff will follow JCQ and awarding-body requirements. The item will be removed, the incident will be reported to the exams officer and head of centre, and the awarding body will be informed where required. The candidate will be treated fairly and calmly, but the school will not minimise or ignore any potential breach of examination regulations.

11.5 REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND CANDIDATE WELLBEING

The school will consider reasonable adjustments for candidates with medical devices, access arrangements, anxiety, sensory needs or other individual needs. Adjustments may include explaining the process in advance, screening in a quieter location, allowing additional time before entry, or agreeing an alternative check where appropriate and consistent with examination security and JCQ requirements.

12. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Staff who use security wands or supervise screening will receive appropriate briefing or training before doing so. This will cover the distinction between screening and searching, respectful conduct, escalation routes, safeguarding expectations, recording requirements and examination-specific procedures where relevant.
- The headteacher is responsible for approving the use of screening in school and ensuring that staff are appropriately briefed.
- Senior leaders are responsible for deciding when general or targeted screening is necessary and proportionate.
- The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding concerns arising from screening are identified, recorded and acted upon.
- The exams officer is responsible for ensuring that examination-related screening supports current examination regulations and centre procedures.
- Staff involved in screening are responsible for conducting the process respectfully, consistently and in line with this policy.
- Pupils are responsible for following school rules and examination instructions and for not bringing prohibited or unauthorised items onto the school site or into examination rooms.

- Parents and carers are expected to support the school by reinforcing expectations and ensuring that prohibited items are not brought to school.

13. COMMUNICATION WITH PUPILS, PARENTS AND STAFF

The school will communicate expectations about prohibited items and screening through appropriate channels, which may include assemblies, tutor time, parent communications, the school website, behaviour expectations, examination briefings and staff training. Pupils and parents will be reminded that screening is used to support safety, wellbeing, good order and examination integrity.

14. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance, examination regulations, safeguarding requirements or school procedures. The school will consider feedback from staff, pupils, parents and governors as part of the review process.

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