

**Search Policy**

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| **Schedule for Development, Monitoring and Review** |
| Approved by governors on: | October 2019 |
| Implementation monitored by: | Andrew Barrett |
| Review arrangements: | Annually |
| Reviewed:The next review of this policy: | March 2025March 2026 |

**SEARCH POLICY**

This policy has been developed to support the school/setting behaviour policy, and in particular, the possession of knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items. It has been introduced primarily in order to safeguard pupils but also to protect staff and others as well.

Headteachers and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they suspect the pupil has certain prohibited items. The items that can be searched for under this power are knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items. The DFE have said that screening which does not involve physical contact does not require consent as the law currently stands. The Headteacher/ Senior Leadership team can request, and police do provide, searches of as many pupils as is necessary where credible intelligence indicates that someone somewhere in a school is concealing a weapon. Indeed, the Government encourages head teachers staff authorised by them and a local police commander to take such action and this is the policy in our school.

However, it will be noted that there remains a gap in the law that allows pupils to refuse to allow a member of school staff to search them or their bag or jacket. This potentially allows for them to dispose of a weapon or other indication of antisocial behaviour such as illegal substances, etc. while the school asks the police to attend and a police officer makes their way to the school. Therefore, it is the policy of the school to seek and obtain parental permission at the initial entry meeting to screen personal belongings prior to admission into the LPS Centre. As a school we make parents aware that there may be a need to search a pupil or their bag or jacket in the presence of at least two authorised members of staff, where possible, including the Headteacher or staff authorised by them is not available in circumstances where it is believed that a weapon or illegal substances are involved.

For information, the police can, with reasonable suspicion, enter a school to search without a Headteacher's consent, conduct a personal search without a pupil's consent, and conduct an unannounced search of more than one pupil in a school, using powers under the Offensive Weapons Act 1996.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school/setting policies and procedures: -

* Behaviour
* Physical Intervention
* Child Protection & Safeguarding

There are occasions when it might be necessary to determine whether or not a pupil is in possession of a substance or object which may be harmful to themselves or others, illegal or which may have been obtained in an unlawful manner. In such circumstances this search policy may be applied. The procedures for the searching of pupils are detailed below:

Firstly, it is illegal to search a pupil without their consent, accept in the case where they suspect the pupil has certain prohibited items. The items that can be searched for under this power are knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items. . All searches conducted by authorised members of staff must be undertaken with pupil consent and using one or more of the following procedures.

**Daily Student Screening**

The everyday use of metal detectors to check students on arrival is regarded as screening [This screening does not require staff to make any specific requests of a student or to make contact with a student] and unless there are any concerns raised as a result of this screening process no further searches, as detailed below are required. (This process is explained at the initial entry meeting).

**Metal Detector Screening Procedure:**

The metal detector procedure should be operated [or witnessed] by the member of staff who is the same sex as the pupil and should not come into contact with the pupil during the search. (This process is explained at the initial entry meeting).

The metal detector should be used in audio mode so that the pupil can hear any changes in the sound. The metal detector will be moved over the body using the following sequence



**Description of Search Sequence**

Round the head.

Along the top of the right arm.

Around the right wrist.

Back along the underside of the right arm.

Down the right side of the upper body to the waist. (Checking the pockets).

Down the outside of the right leg (Checking the pockets).

Round both ankles (Checking the socks).

Up the outside of the left leg to the waist (making sure any pockets are covered).

Up the left side of the upper body (Checking the pockets).

Under the left arm.

Around the left wrist.

Along the top of the left arm.

Down the back of the right leg.

Up the back of the left leg.

Down the front of the right leg (Checking the pockets).

Up the front of the left leg (Checking the pockets).

**1.**

**2.**

**10.**

**4.**

**15.**

**13.**

**9.**

**5.**

**6.**

**12.**

**16.**

**8.**

**11.**

**14.**

**3.**

**7.**

**Low Level Searches:**

In circumstances involving non-threatening incidents members of staff are permitted to request that pupils demonstrate that they are not in possession of certain items or objects e.g., items of equipment, cigarettes, lighters, etc. Once the decision has been made to ask a pupil to consent to a low-level search at least two authorised members of staff must be present.

When conducting a Low Level Search the member(s) of staff directing the search should ask the pupil to turn out their pockets and if necessary to demonstrate that they are not concealing any objects in their socks or up their sleeves. During a low-level search there should be no contact with the pupil or their clothing.

Following a Low level Search a member of the Senior Leadership team will decide whether or not further action or reporting is required and will direct the relevant staff accordingly.

**Procedure if a potentially dangerous or prohibited object or substance is detected:**

It should be explained to the pupil that if a metal or prohibited object or substance is detected they will be required to identify the object / substance that they have on their person and will be required to hand in the object / substance. If the pupil refuses to comply the area will be checked again with the metal detector and the request repeated. If the pupil continues to refuse then a Medium or Higher-Level Search procedure may be required [See below].

**Medium Level Searches:**

Medium level searches may require members of staff to search a pupil’s clothing or ask them to remove a jacket or their shoes in order to allow a member of staff to search them. As in the case of low level searches the pupil must agree to the search. Medium level searches should be conducted in a private area away from other pupils and must only be conducted in the presence of a senior manager and one other authorised member of staff, one of whom should be the same sex as the pupil. It is recommended that the clothing search and the request to remove clothing are made by the member of staff who is the same sex as the pupil.

Under no circumstances should clothing being worn by the pupil be touched by a member of staff. Clothing should only be searched once it has been removed by the pupil and handed to the member of staff by the pupil.

Following a Medium Level Search a senior manager will decide whether or not further action or reporting is required and will direct the relevant staff accordingly.

**Higher Level Searches**:

Higher level searches can only be authorised by a senior manager. Higher level searches will normally be carried out on a planned basis and with the consent of parents. However, they may be sanctioned by a member of the Senior Leadership team if there is reason to believe that by not carrying out a search, the pupil, staff or other pupils will be placed at risk. For example, in the case where they suspect the pupil has certain prohibited items. The items that can be searched for under this power are knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items.

Higher level searches will require pupils to agree to demonstrate that they are not in the possession of dangerous, illegal or potentially harmful items before they are allowed to engage in any education or activity programmes. Higher level searches must be conducted in a private area, away from other pupils e.g., a reflection room. They must be conducted by a minimum of two authorised staff, one of whom must be the same sex as the pupil and one of whom must be of the Senior Leadership team. Instructions to empty pockets or remove jackets or shoes must be made by a member of staff who is the same sex as the pupil. Under no circumstances should a pupil be asked to remove any item of clothing which would result in them having to display areas of their body such as their torso or legs. This search will take place in a reflection room that is monitored by CCTV.

If the pupil continues to refuse to comply the following action will be taken:

* The pupil will be required to remain in a reflection room and supported by staff members.
* If it is suspected that the pupil is carrying a weapon or harmful substance the Police will be called using the 2222222-telephone number. Staff will then act on the advice of the Police which may mean:
	+ Staff will support the pupil to remain in a reflection room until the Police arrive.
	+ Staff will support the pupil to remain in a reflection room until their parent/carer can be contacted and they can be sent home.

**Under no circumstances will a pupil who is suspected of carrying a weapon or harmful substance be allowed to circulate freely in any part of the building.**

Once a Higher-Level Search has taken place, and regardless of the outcome, this must be recorded on CPOMS

* The Headteacher/ Senior Leadership Team must be informed when a higher-level search has been conducted on a pupil and reported on CPOMS. All cases will be reviewed in the weekly safeguarding meeting that takes place every Friday with the services DSL’s
* A Generic & Individual Risk Assessment & Positive Handling Plan must be reviewed and updated for the pupil.
* Staff must be made aware of the risk assessment & positive handling plan for the pupil. The risk assessment will be electronically stored in the students file.
* If it is deemed appropriate to use a Higher-Level Search on each occasion that the pupil attends the school/setting then the parent(s)/carer(s) must be informed through a return to school meeting. If parent(s)/carer(s) can not attend the meeting they must be made aware through phone call or Teams meeting and this call/ minutes/ key action points will be logged on CPOMS.

**Confiscation**

**Items found as a result of a search:**

* An authorised staff member carrying out a search can confiscate any item that they have reasonable grounds for suspecting: • poses a risk to staff or pupils;
* All pupils are expected to hand in their cigarettes, vapes and lighters at the beginning of the day. This scheme is designed to avoid issues relating to the misuse of cigarettes, vapes and lighters and the sharing of cigarettes and vapes between pupils.
* Parent or carer will be informed
* Cigarettes, vapes and lighters to be disposed accordingly or returned to the parent or carer

**This policy references the following legislation:**

* Coroners and Justice Act 2009
* Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008
* Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
* The Education Act 1996
* The Education and Inspections Act 2006
* The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
* The schools (Specification and Disposal of Articles) Regulations 2012

**APPENDIX A** below: LPS letter to parent/carer/student



Dear Parents, Carers, and Students,

At the Leicester Partnership School, the safety and wellbeing of our students, staff, and visitors is our highest priority. In line with this commitment, we have a clear and robust search policy designed to maintain a safe and supportive learning environment.

As part of this policy, students may be subject to enhanced searches when entering the school premises if deemed necessary. These searches will always be conducted in accordance with the Department for Education’s guidelines and with the utmost respect for the dignity and rights of the individual. Enhanced searches may include the examination of bags, outer clothing, and personal belongings to ensure that prohibited or unsafe items are not brought into the school. These searchers will be carried out by a member of the Leadership team alongside another member of staff.

Enhanced searches will only be carried out where there is reasonable justification, such as concerns for safety, wellbeing, or the maintenance of a calm and orderly environment. They will be conducted by trained staff members and, where possible, in the presence of another adult.

We ask for your support and understanding in implementing these measures, which are designed to safeguard our entire school community. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this policy further, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and positive environment for everyone at LPS

Yours faithfully,

Shaun Whittingham
Head Teacher
LPS