



**THE WESTLEIGH SCHOOL**  
Aspiring & Achieving Together

# Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy

<b>Policy Originator:</b>	T Kearns
<b>Last review Date:</b>	April 2020

The Westleigh School's policy reflects the Department for Education's advice on powers of screening, searching and confiscation.

Wherever possible, searches will be undertaken with the consent of the student. However, school staff do have the right to carry out a search for the following **Prohibited Items** items without consent, if it is necessary and in the best interests of the school/other students. There must be 'reasonable' grounds for suspecting that a student is in possession of a prohibited item.

Searches would normally be undertaken by designated members of staff – SLT, Pastoral leads, Heads of Year or Pastoral workers. If **any** member of staff thinks that there are reasonable grounds to search a pupil, they should send for any of the above members of staff.

However, in exceptional circumstances **all** staff are authorised to conduct a search, if it is felt to be in the best interest of students and staff, as well as safe to do so.

### **Prohibited Items:**

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal Drugs / harmful drugs
- Stolen Items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic Images
- 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 the property of, any person (including the student).

The member of staff undertaking the search should be the same sex as the student being searched. (The only exception to this would be if there is a risk of serious harm caused to a person if we do not conduct the search immediately).

### **Searching with Consent**

School staff can search students with their consent for any item. In this circumstance, a student will be asked to turn out his (her) pockets AND allow the staff member to look in the student's bag or locker and for the student to agree.

If the student refuses, then school reserves the right to impose an appropriate punishment for refusal to co-operate.

## **Confiscation**

School staff will seize any prohibited item or any item considered to be harmful/ detrimental to school discipline found as a result of a search. These will not be returned to students. They can be returned to parents, only if it's practical and reasonable to do so. They can be passed to the Police if the item could be used to commit an offence/cause injury/damage.

Any other items which are confiscated will not be returned to the student (unless its agreed by senior staff and the item is not deemed to of danger to the student or others around them). In the case of stolen items, these will be returned to the owner, or disposed of according to DfE guidelines.

\* (Please note: E-cigarettes are also banned in addition to the prohibited items and can be confiscated).

In the case of indecent images on students' mobile phones, Staff can seize the phone and look into the memory of the phone to establish if these images exist. Also to establish whether they have been received or passed on, these may be deleted or passed to the Police if appropriate.

Mobile phones will be confiscated in accordance with the school's Mobile Phone Policy.

Jewellery will be confiscated in accordance with the school's Personal Presentation Policy.

In line with our health eating policy in school, students are not allowed to bring the following drinks into school:-

- Energy drinks, (Lucozade/Isotonic/'Monster') and other drinks which have a high sugar content.
- Fizzy pop, such as coke/diet coke, etc.

Such drinks do not assist good behaviour for learning. If students are seen with these drinks, they will be confiscated and not returned to the student. Instead, students are advised to bring water (natural or flavoured) or juice, which will hydrate them and not interfere with good learning.

### **Please note:**

The school is not required to inform parents before a search takes place or seek their consent. Parents will be informed if alcohol, illegal drugs, potentially harmful substances or objects are found. But it is good practice to inform the parents as soon as practicable after a search. In some instances it is favourable to contact parents first, to prevent confrontation or unnecessary restraint if the student refuses to be searched (only if the delay doesn't prejudice the outcome).

By law, schools can require students to undergo screening by a walk-through or hand-held metal detector even if they do not suspect them of having a weapon, without the consent of the student. Screening is currently a very rare occurrence in schools and is only introduced when deemed to be necessary.

Any searches undertaken will be mindful of a student's privacy. Any complaints regarding screening/searching should be made through the normal school complaints procedure.

Searches of students are very infrequent and are undertaken when there is good reason to believe that it is in the best interests of the students and the school to do so.

Any search conducted by staff on students whether there's a negative or positive result, should be recorded on the appropriate search form. These forms are kept on the schools J Drive under pastoral data.

*This policy is one of the school's pastoral policies and should not be read in isolation from the whole school Behaviour Management Policy and the school's policy on Security and Offensive Weapons.*

<b>Adopted by the Board of Governors and recorded in the Minutes of the meeting held on:</b>	06/11/2014
<b>Review Date</b>	April 2020
<b>Headteacher</b>	