



# **Hebburn Comprehensive School**

## **Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy**

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### **Statement of Intent**

Hebburn Comprehensive School is committed to ensuring a safe and orderly environment for all students and staff. We recognise our legal duty to maintain discipline and to promote the welfare and safety of our school community. This policy sets out the circumstances under which students may be searched or screened, and the procedures for the confiscation of prohibited items, in line with current legislation and DfE guidance.

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### **Legal Framework**

This policy is based on the following legislation and guidance:

- Education Act 1996
  - Education and Inspections Act 2006
  - Education Act 2011
  - The School Behaviour (Determination and Publicising of Measures in Academies) Regulations 2012
  - Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools (DfE, July 2022)
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, latest version)
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - Equality Act 2010
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### **Key Principles**

- Searches will always be carried out with due regard to the dignity, privacy, and rights of the student.
- Students will not be searched as a punishment but in response to a specific concern.
- Staff authorised to carry out searches or screenings will receive appropriate training.
- Parents will be informed if a prohibited item is found during a search.
- Any safeguarding concerns arising from a search will be dealt with according to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and/or Behaviour and Reward Policy.

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## Screening

Hebburn Comprehensive School may require students to undergo screening by a walk-through or hand-held metal detector (arch or wand) as a condition of entry to preserve safety. This is not a search and can be carried out without consent.

- Any refusal to be screened may be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- Screening will be carried out respectfully, and without physical contact.

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## Searching With Consent

- School staff can search a student for any item with the student's consent.
- Consent does not have to be written — verbal consent is acceptable.
- If a student refuses, disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

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## Searching Without Consent

Authorised staff have the legal power to search students or their possessions, without consent, if they have **reasonable grounds** to suspect that a student is in possession of a **prohibited item**.

### Prohibited items include:

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- E-cigarettes or vapes
- 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)
- Mobile phones or other items that contravene the school's Behaviour Policy

### **Searching will be conducted:**

- By a same-sex member of staff (unless there is an immediate risk to safety)
- With a witness present (preferably also the same sex)
- In a private space and never in public view

### **What may be searched:**

- The student's clothing, outerwear (e.g., coats), bags, and lockers (with or without the student present)
  - Personal electronic devices, following guidance under Section 90 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
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### **Confiscation**

School staff can seize any prohibited item found during a search or any item considered harmful or detrimental to school discipline.

- Items may be retained, returned to parents, destroyed, or handed to the police, depending on the nature of the item.
  - Confiscated mobile phones or electronic devices may be searched for data if there is reason to believe the device contains material that poses a safeguarding or criminal risk.
  - If illegal content is found (e.g., indecent images), it must not be shared but referred to the police and safeguarding team immediately.
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### **Safeguarding Considerations**

Any concerns about a student's welfare that arise during a search must be recorded and passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This may include possession of items that indicate drug misuse, gang affiliation, or exploitation.

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### **Recording and Communication**

- A written record will be made of all searches conducted without consent where prohibited items are found.
  - Parents will be informed if any prohibited item is found and what action is taken.
  - If police involvement is necessary, this will be managed by the senior leadership team.
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## Complaints

Complaints about searching, screening, or confiscation will be dealt with through the school's Complaints Policy. Parents and students have the right to raise concerns if they believe a search was conducted improperly.

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## Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body to ensure it remains compliant with legislation and guidance and continues to meet the needs of the school.

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**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Mrs S Burdis

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**Signed:**

**Head Teacher:**



Mr D R Thompson

**Chair of Governors:**



Mr G Thompson

**Ratification Date:**

02/10/2026

**Date of Next Review:**

Autumn Term 2027