



Abingdon Prep School

Searching and Confiscation Policy

Introduction

Abingdon Prep School aims to provide a calm, safe and supportive environment in which pupils can learn and develop. Whilst the occasions on which a pupil or their property might need to be searched or property confiscated are extremely rare, the school has developed this policy to ensure that any actions are in accordance with legislation referred to in the DfE's *Searching, Screen and Confiscation Advice for Schools July 2022*.

Pupils have the right to a reasonable level of personal privacy under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Any interference with this right by the school must be justified and proportionate. Powers to search pupils are set out in the Education Act 1996 and are compatible with Article 8.

Searching

Prohibited items

The Head or a member of their Leadership Team may conduct a search of a pupil or their possessions where they have reasonable grounds to suspect that the pupils may have a prohibited item set out below:

- Knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- any article that a member of staff reasonably suspects or is likely to be used to commit an offence or cause personal injury to, or damage property of, any person
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images

If the Head or their Leadership Team wish to search a pupil for any other items, this will only be done once parents have been contacted and their

consent obtained.

The list of prohibited items set out above is also set out in the school's Behaviour Policy.

Consent to search

Where appropriate, the pupil will be asked to produce the banned item voluntarily to avoid the need for a search.

If a search is considered necessary but not urgent, the Head or Leadership Team will make contact with the pupil's parents to explain the situation and seek their consent to a search and/or ask for them to come into school.

In the very rare event that a pupil will not cooperate and the Head or their Leadership Team consider that, without removing the prohibited item, the pupil poses a threat of harm to himself/herself or others, minimal force for the minimum amount of time will be used to undertake the search.

Before any search, full consideration will be given to the age and needs of the pupil which includes those with individual needs or special educational needs and reasonable adjustments made if appropriate.

Any search will always be undertaken with a second member of staff present.

The DSL will be notified of all searches undertaken as soon as possible after the search and, should the circumstances require, will make any necessary referrals.

During a search

An appropriate location, ideally away from other pupils will be used for the search.

The person conducting the search will be the same sex as the pupil being searched and will always have a second member of staff (of any sex) unless:

- the member of staff carrying out the search believes there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency and
- in the time available, it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out by a member of staff who is the same sex as the pupil or for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff

The person conducting the search may search a pupil's outer clothing, pockets, possession, desk or locker but must not require the pupil to remove

any clothing other than outdoor clothing.

Strip searches will not be carried out by members of staff and the Head or their Leadership Team should refer to the DfE's *Searching, Screen and Confiscation Advice for Schools July 2022* for further guidance on involving the police.

After a search

The DSL or deputies will be alerted to any search as soon as possible after it has taken place so that any support or further action can be taken.

Any searches for a prohibited item will be recorded as a Safeguarding incident whether or not an item has been found. The record will include: the date, time and location of search, the pupil's name, who conducted the search and the other adult(s) present, what was being searched for, the reason for the search, what items if any were found and what follow-up action was taken as a consequence of the search.

Parents will always be informed of any search for a prohibited item and the outcome of the search as soon as possible.

Any complaints by parents relating to this policy should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

Confiscation

Any prohibited item found in a search can be confiscated by the person undertaking the search. The Head or their Leadership Team will follow the DfE's *Searching, Screen and Confiscation Advice for Schools July 2022* to determine what happens to the item as appropriate. This may involve contacting the police, disposing of the item safely or returning the item directly to the parents.

Any evidence which is on an electronic device may need to be dealt with by referring to the school's Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

A member of staff may confiscate a non prohibited item as a disciplinary measure but will return this item to the pupil or to their parents within an appropriate timescale.

Consequences for pupils

Where pupils have been searched and found to have prohibited items, the school will refer to the Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy and Exclusion and Suspension Policy as appropriate.

Deputy Head

Last Internal Review: September 2025

Last Governor Review: November 2024

Next Governor Review: November 2025