Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Training for Derwent and Southill Staff march 2026

Searching, Screening and Confiscation

By the end of this session staff will:

- Understand **when pupils can be searched**
- Know **what items can be confiscated**
- Understand **staff legal powers**
- Know **school procedures for reporting**

Key Guidance

Schools must follow:

- Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools
- School behaviour policy
- Safeguarding procedures

This guidance applies to:

- maintained schools
- academies
- free schools
- pupil referral units

Types of Searches

There are two main types of search:

1. Search with consent

- pupil agrees to search
- staff can search for **any item**

2. Search without consent

- allowed only for **prohibited items**

Prohibited Items

Schools can search without consent for:

- knives or weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco or cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- items likely to cause harm
- items banned by school rules

Who Can Conduct a Search

Searches can be carried out by:

- the headteacher
- staff authorised by the headteacher

How a Search Must Be Conducted

Key rules:

- staff member must be **same sex as pupil**
- a **witness must be present**
- witness should also be same sex if possible
- only **outer clothing** can be removed

Where Searches Can Take Place

Searches can occur:

- on **school premises**
- during **school trips**
- anywhere staff have **lawful control of the pupil**

Screening Pupils

Schools may use:

- walk-through metal detectors
- hand-held detectors
- Consent is **not required** for screening.

Confiscation of Items

Staff can confiscate items if:

- they are **banned under school rules**
- they **pose a risk**
- they are **evidence of an offence**

- **Education and Inspections Act 2006**

What Happens to Confiscated Items

Depending on the item, staff may:

- return it to the pupil later
- give it to parents
- dispose of it
- pass it to the police

Recording Searches

Schools should record:

- reason for search
- who conducted it
- witness present
- items found
- action taken

Good Practice

Staff should:

- remain calm and respectful
- explain why the search is happening
- maintain pupil dignity
- follow safeguarding procedures

When Staff Should Seek Help

Staff should involve senior staff if:

- a weapon is suspected
- the pupil becomes aggressive
- safeguarding concerns arise
- the situation feels unsafe

Key Messages

- Searches must follow **DfE guidance**
- Staff should **ask for consent first**
- Only authorised staff should search
- Record and report incidents
- Safeguarding and pupil dignity must come first