

SCREEN & SEARCH POLICY

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Approved by (Name, date, signature)

Liz Keeble May 2022

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SCREEN & SEARCH POLICY

Mission

We believe in investing in people. As professionals in the teaching and training professions, we strive to provide a better future for the children, young people and home settings we work with. Success for us means unleashing the potential of each individual so they can grow, develop and reach the potential of which they are capable. Our values are grounded in our determination to be the change we want to see in the world, through passion, commitment and integrity. We strive to plant a seed of kindness and compassion in a generation that will produce resilience and hope and enable them to aspire and achieve productive and fulfilled lives. Our success is measured in the lives we changed.

At the Omnia Foundation, we create a secure and safe environment that encourages communication, self-belief, mutual respect and success. We provide a rich and balanced curriculum that develops every child, allowing them to achieve their true potential.

Aims of the policy

- to outline the rationale behind the foundation's approach to screening and searching students
- to give an overview of the processes in place for effective screening and searching

This policy has been created to ensure that the foundation complies with current legislation.

The following text is taken from page 11 of Behaviour & Discipline in Schools

What the law allows:

35. There are two sets of legal provisions which enable school staff to confiscate items from pupils:

1) The general power to discipline (as described in the bullets under the heading "Discipline in Schools – Teachers' Powers" on pages 3 and 4) enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a punishment, so long as it is reasonable in the circumstances. The law protects them from liability for damage to, or loss of, any confiscated items provided they have acted lawfully.

The legislation does not describe what must be done with the confiscated item and the school behaviour policy may set this out

and 2) Power to search **without consent** for "prohibited items" including:

- knives and weapons
- alcohol
- illegal drugs
- stolen items
- tobacco and cigarette papers
- fireworks
- pornographic images
- any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property; and
- any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for. In the case of our foundation, this would include a mobile phone and vapes.

The legislation sets out what must be done with prohibited items found as a result of a search.

36. Weapons and knives and extreme or child pornography must always be handed over to the police, otherwise it is for the teacher to decide if and when to return a confiscated item.

37. More detailed advice on confiscation and what must be done with prohibited items found as a result of a search is provided in 'Screening, Searching and Confiscation – advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies'. See here for a link to this document: [Screening, Searching and Confiscation](#)

This policy is written in light of and should be read in conjunction with the foundation Me, Myself and I Policy.

This policy recognises that

- 1) certain prohibited items present a clear risk to the health, wellbeing and safety of our students and staff. This policy is in place
- 2) to protect students, staff and visitors to the site
- 3) our students may be vulnerable to criminal and sexual exploitation and that this will adversely impact on their understanding of what is appropriate and inappropriate
- 4) given the nature of our students' special educational needs, it is likely that they will try to "smuggle in" prohibited items on occasion
- 5) some prohibited items represent a distraction for the students, eg mobile phones. The foundation has drawn up a mobile phone charter with students (see Appendix I) which states that students are permitted to have their phones during the lunch hour on the understanding that they are returned before learning recommences in the afternoon.
- 6) it is illegal, given the age of our students, for the majority of items prohibited on-site to be in the students' possession, eg addictive substances

How do we manage screening and searching?

Only permanent members of staff employed by the foundation may conduct a search. All members of staff are authorised by the Head of Foundation under the remit of this policy to search for any and all prohibited items that may be deemed to constitute a threat to the safety of the students, staff and visitors to the foundation.

Members of staff searching a student may not be the same sex as the student. This is because the majority of items expected to be brought on-site would constitute a threat to the safety of the students, staff and visitors to the foundation.

Screening and searching will always take place with multiple members of staff present.

Where a student resists a search, members of staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances when conducting a search for knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks, pornographic images or articles that have been or could be used to commit an offence or cause harm. Such force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

On arrival, students are "wanded," using a handheld battery-operated metal detector. Different members of staff, as outlined above, will be assigned this duty each day.

Once the students have been wanded, they are lightly patted down by a nominated member of staff to search for items that will be missed by the metal detector, eg cigarettes.

If the member of staff "patting down" suspects that the student is concealing a prohibited item, they may ask them to turn out their pockets or take off their shoes.

Strip searches will never be carried out by staff, will only be carried out in extreme circumstances by a police officer who has been called to the foundation and home settings will always be informed. Two members of the foundation staff will always be present.

Once staff are satisfied that a student has not concealed a prohibited item, the student will be permitted on-site and will go straight to their hub.

What happens to items that are confiscated?

As stated above, there are some items which must be delivered to the police. This includes weapons, controlled drugs and some stolen items (please see the linked guidance above for details).

Where extreme or child-related pornographic images are found, they must be delivered to the police as soon as is practicable. Other pornographic material may be destroyed by staff.

Items such as cigarettes and alcohol will be disposed of by staff and not returned to the pupil.

All mobile phones are locked in a box and retained by staff until lunchtime when they are returned to the students for them to use during their break. Mobile phones are expected to be returned to staff at the end of the lunch break. If students fail to comply, then they will not be permitted to have their phone during the lunch break on the following day.
