



Newbridge Learning Community



Community



Courage



Compassion



Competence

Searching, Screening & Confiscation Policy

Date policy last reviewed:

The next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2027

Headteacher Date: _____

Chair of governors Date: _____



Newbridge Learning Community

Screening, Searching and Confiscation Policy (2026)

Status: Approved by SLT / Governing Body

Review: Annually, or sooner if national guidance changes

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out Newbridge Learning Community's approach to **screening, searching and confiscation**. It reflects **Department for Education statutory advice** and national guidance current at the point of review (2026).

The policy aims to:

- Keep pupils, staff and visitors safe
- Protect pupils' dignity, rights and wellbeing
- Ensure practice is **lawful, proportionate and trauma-informed**
- Take full account of pupils' **SEMH, ASC, sensory and additional needs**

This policy applies to **all pupils, staff and school premises**, including:

- Educational visits
 - Alternative provision placements
 - Off-site activities organised by the school
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2. Principles

- **Safety and safeguarding are paramount.** Searching, screening and confiscation are used only when necessary and proportionate.
 - **Dignity and wellbeing matter.** Searches should be discreet, calm and respectful, avoiding public situations wherever possible.
 - **Trauma-informed practice.** Staff will adapt approaches for pupils with SEMH, ASC, sensory sensitivities or trauma histories.
 - **Lawful and accountable practice.** All actions will comply with statutory powers and be recorded appropriately.
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3. Definitions

- **Screening:** Checking pupils or belongings without physical contact (e.g. bag checks, hand-held or walk-through metal detectors).
- **Search with consent:** Asking a pupil to allow staff to look through belongings or pockets.
- **Search without consent:** A statutory power allowing authorised staff to search where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a prohibited item.
- **Prohibited items:** Items which must be confiscated if found (see Section 7).

(Definitions based on DfE guidance.)

4. Roles and Authorisation

- The **Headteacher** holds overall responsibility and may authorise named senior staff to conduct searches.
- A current list of **authorised staff** will be maintained and reviewed regularly.
- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** oversees safeguarding concerns arising from searches and ensures appropriate referrals.

Only authorised staff may carry out searches without consent.

5. Training and Staff Conduct

- Authorised staff receive training covering:
 - Statutory powers and limitations
 - Safeguarding responsibilities
 - Trauma-informed and SEND-aware practice
 - Equality, dignity and professional conduct
 - Training is refreshed whenever guidance changes.
 - National guidance (DfE, The Key, KCSIE, and trade union advice) informs training content.
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6. Screening (e.g. Metal Detectors / Bag Checks)

- Screening may be used where reasonably necessary to keep the site safe.



- Routine screening will be communicated to pupils and parents/carers in advance where possible.
 - Screening does **not require consent**, but must always be proportionate and respectful.
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7. Prohibited Items and Statutory Search Powers

7.1 Prohibited Items (Statutory)

The following items must be confiscated if found:

- Knives or weapons (including disguised blades)
- Items intended to be used as weapons
- Illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia
- Alcohol
- Stolen items
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Tobacco, cigarette papers, e-cigarettes, vapes and related paraphernalia
- Volatile substances
- Any item likely to:
 - Commit an offence
 - Cause injury
 - Damage property
 - Seriously disrupt learning or safety

7.2 Additional School-Identified Prohibited Items

Authorised staff may also search for and confiscate:

- Lighters
- Aerosols
- Legal highs / psychoactive substances
- Energy drinks
- Mobile phones (where subject to a school ban)

7.2 Filming Incidents

- Pupils are not permitted to film incidents involving other pupils or staff.
- If a pupil films an incident, staff may confiscate the device in line with the school's behaviour and safeguarding policy.



- Any footage is reviewed by senior staff only and used to support safeguarding or disciplinary action where necessary.
 - Parents/carers are informed if their child is involved in filming an incident.
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8. Searching Pupils: Procedures and Safeguards

a) Search with Consent

- Pupils will be asked for permission wherever appropriate.
- Searches should take place with the pupil present and another adult where practicable.

b) Search without Consent

- Authorised staff may search outer clothing, pockets and possessions where there are reasonable grounds.
- Searches should be conducted by a staff member of the same sex where possible.
- Removal of clothing beyond outer coats, hats and shoes is **not permitted**.

c) Strip Searches

- School staff **will never conduct strip searches**.
- If a strip search is deemed necessary, the police will be contacted.
- The school will safeguard the pupil and inform parents unless this places the pupil at further risk.

d) Witnesses

- A second member of staff should be present where reasonably practicable.
 - All attendees must be recorded.
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9. Searching Electronic Devices and Digital Content

- Devices may be searched where there are reasonable grounds to suspect content that breaches school rules or poses a safeguarding risk.
- Staff should avoid viewing unrelated personal content.
- If safeguarding concerns arise (e.g. indecent images, self-harm content), staff must:
 - Stop viewing immediately
 - Secure the device



- Inform the DSL without delay
 - Police involvement will be considered where appropriate.
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10. Use of Reasonable Force

- Reasonable force may be used **only where necessary to prevent harm** and only for items permitted by law.
 - Any use of force must be:
 - Proportionate
 - Recorded
 - Reported in line with the Physical Intervention Policy
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11. Confiscation, Retention, Disposal and Transfer

- Illegal or dangerous items will be secured and passed to police as required.
 - Drugs will never be returned to pupils.
 - Tobacco and vapes may be disposed of; alcohol may be disposed of or returned to parents at the Headteacher's discretion.
 - Stolen items will be returned to owners or passed to police.
 - Records will be kept detailing:
 - Item
 - Date and location
 - Staff involved
 - Disposal or return arrangements
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12. Recording, Reporting and Parental Contact

- All searches and confiscations are recorded on the school system.
 - Parents/carers will usually be informed, unless this would:
 - Increase risk to the pupil
 - Compromise a safeguarding or police investigation
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13. Safeguarding and SEND / SEMH / ASC Adjustments

- Searches will be adapted for pupils with additional needs:
 - Clear explanations



- Calming approaches
- Presence of trusted adults
- Consideration of EHCPs and support plans

Staff must consider reasonable adjustments before proceeding wherever safe to do so.

14. Complaints

- Complaints are handled through the Complaints Policy.
 - The school will review any concern raised and reflect on practice.
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15. Governance, Monitoring and Review

- The Headteacher ensures:
 - Authorisation lists are current
 - Training is in place
 - Records are reviewed by the DSL
 - Governors receive an annual summary report.
 - This policy is reviewed annually or following changes to national guidance.
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16. Linked Policies

- Behaviour Policy
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Physical Intervention Policy
 - SEND / Inclusion Policy
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17. Appendix: Staff Checklist

1. Ensure you are authorised and trained.
2. Establish reasonable grounds and explain calmly to the pupil.
3. Use a witness and same-sex staff member where possible.
4. Do not remove clothing beyond outer garments.
5. Stop and inform the DSL if safeguarding concerns arise.
6. Record fully and inform parents where appropriate.



Key Guidance Sources (Reviewed 2026)

- DfE: *Searching, Screening and Confiscation*
- KCSIE (current edition)
- GOV.UK statutory guidance
- The Key for School Leaders
- Trade union guidance on searching and safeguarding