



The Priory School

Educating Students for Success in Life

Name of policy	Searching, Screening & Confiscation
Statutory	No
Date policy was updated	September 2018
Date of next review	September 2019
Governors committee	Student Wellbeing
Member of staff responsible for the policy	LF

Rationale

The Priory School is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all students and cultivating an environment of mutual respect. In the unusual event of a student, or a student's locker, bag or other repository for possessions, being searched, the school will take all reasonable steps to maintain a balanced approach to student privacy.

Aims

We aim to:

- Ensure that students and parents are aware of what items are not allowed on the school site or on off-site visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC);
- To raise the students awareness of the dangers of illegal items and the consequences of having them in their possession;
- To comply with statutory legislation when searching, screening or confiscating items.

Schools' Obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

Under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, students have a right to respect for their private life. In the context of these particular powers, this means that students have the right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy. The right under Article 8 is not absolute, it can be interfered with but any interference with this right by The Priory School must be justified and proportionate. The powers to search in the Education Act 1996 are compatible with Article 8. The Priory School in exercising these powers lawfully should have no difficulty in demonstrating that it has also acted in accordance with Article 8.

Prohibited Items

Below in Table 1 is a list of banned items that students must not bring to school or have in their possession during the school day. This table can also be found in the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy.

In addition:

- 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)

will be searched for and confiscated.

Table 1

Knives or weapons	Controlled drugs and paraphernalia	Tobacco and cigarette papers	Pornographic images
Alcohol	Fireworks	Stolen items	Energy and fizzy drinks
Solvents and glues	E-cigarettes	Chewing gum	Mobile phones
Aerosols and gases	Matches and lighters	Legal highs	Spinners or similar gadgets
Medication unless by prior agreement	Items of clothing and jewellery that do not follow the school uniform		

Screening

The Priory School does not currently require students to undergo screening by a walk-through or hand-held metal detector (arch or wand). However, in the light of this situation changing The Priory School will comply with statutory legislation with regard to screening. The Priory School has the statutory power to make rules on student behaviour and a duty as an employer to manage the safety of staff, students and visitors. The Priory School can impose, as a requirement to entering the school, that students undergo screening. This type of screening, without physical contact, is not subject to the same conditions as apply to the powers to search without consent.

Refusing to Be Screened

- Health and safety legislation requires a school to be managed in a way that does not expose students or staff to risks to their health and safety and this would include making reasonable rules as a condition of admittance.
- If a student refuses to be screened then a decision to refuse the student onto the school site could be made.
- If the student fails to comply, and the school does not let the student in, the school has not excluded the student and the student's absence should be treated as unauthorised.
- Alternatively the student may be placed in isolation and parents contacted to come and resolve the situation.

Searching

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of members of the school community there will be occasions where students will have their possessions searched. There are two types of searches:

- Searching with consent; and
- Searching without consent.

Schools are not required to inform parents before a search takes place or to seek their consent to search their child. The school will contact the parents / carers if a search uncovers banned items. Consequences will be issued in line with the school Behaviour for Learning Policy and recorded on the student's behaviour log.

Searching with Consent

- School staff can search students and their belongings for banned items under the common law powers to search.
- If a member of The Priory School staff suspects a student has a banned item in their possession, they can instruct the student to turn out their pockets or bag. No formal written consent from the student is required.
- If the student refuses, the member of staff can apply an appropriate sanction as set out in the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- Under common law powers, the school is able to search lockers and desks for any item provided the student agrees. If a student does not consent to a search then it is possible to conduct a search without consent but only for the items identified in Table 1.
- Where a student has refused to give consent for a search the school will sanction a search without consent. A sanction for defiance will be given in the first instance in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy. If the search turns up any banned items then a further consequence will be issued in line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Searching without Consent

- School staff can search students and their belongings for banned items under common law powers.
- A search can be undertaken if a member of staff has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student is in possession of a banned item as identified in Table 1.

Protocols for Searching without Consent

- At The Priory School a search without consent will be undertaken by members of the Senior Leadership Team and / or the pastoral team.
- There must be two members of staff involved in the search and where possible both members of staff should be the same sex as the student. If this is not the case, the member of staff doing the searching must be the same sex as the student.
- In exceptional cases where there is a serious risk of harm and clear urgency, a search of a student of the opposite sex to the member of staff and / or without a witness present may take place.
- The searching of a student should be undertaken away from other students and where possible in an office or the pastoral base.
- The member of staff conducting the search must not require the student to remove any clothing other than outer clothing. 'Outer clothing' means clothing that is not worn next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear but 'outer clothing' includes hats, shoes, boots, gloves, ties and scarves.
- If a student refuses to co-operate with the members of staff conducting the search then the following actions may be applied dependent on the banned items being looked for:
 1. Low risk banned items – parents contacted and the student placed in isolation until they are able to come in to resolve the issue;
 2. High risk banned items – parents contacted, police informed and the student placed in isolation until parents or police arrive.
- **Using force** - If it is deemed that the student has a high risk banned item e.g. a weapon or drugs and there is serious risk of harm to themselves or others, then members of staff can use such force as is reasonable when conducting the search. Any restrictive physical intervention (RPI) will be conducted in line with the school Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy.

Electronic devices

All students are aware and have signed the Acceptable use Agreement and have been taught about on-line safety. Where a mobile phone or electronic device has been confiscated after a search, the school has the statutory authority to examine any data or files on the device where there are concerns that an offence has been committed. Parental or student consent to search through a mobile phone or electronic device is not required. Where pornographic images of children or extreme pornographic images are discovered the school DSP will liaise with the police and relevant outside agencies.

Confiscation

Schools' general power to discipline, as circumscribed by Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a student's property. The Priory School staff can seize any banned item found as a result of a search. They can also seize any item they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline, the welfare and safeguarding of others in the school community. Students who have been searched and items confiscated will be dealt with in line with the school Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Table 2

Banned item	Action required
Knives or weapons	The school will secure the item and contact the police.
Controlled drugs and paraphernalia	The school will secure the item and contact the police.
Legal highs	The school will secure the item and contact the police.
Alcohol	School will dispose of the item.
Energy and fizzy drinks	School will dispose of the item.
Fireworks	School will dispose of the item.
Stolen items (high value)	The school will secure the item and contact the police.
Stolen items (low value)	The school will look to return the item.
Pornographic images	The school will secure the images, refer to the DSP and contact the police.
Solvents and glues	School will dispose of the item.
Aerosols and gases	School will dispose of the item.
Tobacco and cigarette papers	School will dispose of the item.
Matches and lighters	School will dispose of the item.
Chewing gum	School will dispose of the item.
Medication unless by prior agreement	School will dispose of the item.
E-cigarettes and paraphernalia	The school will secure the item and return to the parents / carers of the student involved.
Mobiles phones	The school will secure the item and return to the parents / carers of the student involved.
Spinners or similar gadgets	The school will secure the item and return to the student at the end of the day.
Items of clothing and jewellery that do not follow the school uniform	The school will secure the item and return to the student at the end of the day.

Relevant other policies:

Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy	The Drugs Policy	Mobile Phone Statement
Special Education Needs Policy	Acceptable Use Agreement	Home School Agreement
Anti-Bullying Policy	Child Protection Policy	Behaviour for Learning Policy