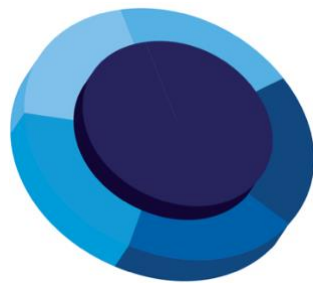


Harpurhey Alternative Provision School



Prohibited Items – Searching Policy

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 it is the responsibility of HAPS school staff to provide a safe environment for our pupils.

The principle of maintaining safety for all pupils means we will conduct searches of pupils at times to protect everyone in school. A list of prohibited items, which may warrant a search:

- knives and weapons
- illegal drugs/alcohol
- stolen items
- an item that staff feel may be used to commit an offence or injure someone (including the pupil in possession of the item themselves)
- tobacco and/or cigarette papers/vapes
- fireworks
- pornographic material

The guidance states that the list of prohibited items should be clearly outlined in the school's behaviour policy and communicated to the school community, including parents. Staff are authorised by the Headteacher to use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for prohibited items. Staff will receive informal training on how to appropriately carry out a search

Other items not covered on the prohibited list but are part of HAPS' drive to keep children safe are:

- Mobile phones in school
- Vapes and E-cigarette devices

These items are covered in the school rules, and so force cannot be used to search for these items which are banned under the school rules, however searches can be completed with consent from the pupil.

Refusal of a search

The law states that staff have the right to search a pupil if the pupil agrees to the search. A child refusing to be searched will routinely be subject to the school behaviour policy and the sanctions there-in. Any search must balance the importance of making considered and justified judgements on how urgent the search is before thinking about using reasonable force where a student refuses the search.

Record-keeping

Following current guidance HAPS will to keep records of searches and are given a list of what they need to record.

These records may be used both for evidence in any follow-up and to provide analytical data for schools to detect patterns or identify a higher than average rate of searches taking place, in which case they are encouraged to consider measures to lower this rate.

Informing parents

Following current guidance school will contact the parents as soon as is practicable and inform them of the search conducted and the outcome of that search. The guidance also states that if parents have a complaint about a search of their child then they should follow the school complaints procedure in the first instance.

Police intervention and strip searches

Pupils may be requested to remove coat, hats or shoes as part of a search. If anymore items are required to be removed it will be recorded as a strip search. Two members of staff will be present for this.

With police intervention staff have a duty of care and should advocate for the wellbeing of the pupil involved at all times. HAPS will consider carefully the potential impact of calling the police, explaining they should 'balance the risk of a potential strip search on the pupil's mental and physical wellbeing and the risk of not recovering the suspected item'. School will have exhausted all other methods before seeking this as a last resort.

Appropriate adult

An appropriate adult is a person designated to provide support to anyone under 18 who is being detained or interviewed by the police. In the case of strip searching by a police officer (who must be the same sex as the child being searched), HAPS will ensure that the child has the support of an appropriate adult present. If the child requests a parent, school will take steps to make this possible unless there is an issue with the urgency of the threat posed to safety.

Staff and their understanding

Only staff that have received training in how to search will complete searches of students. There will always be another member of staff on hand to observe the search unless staff are not available in which case the search will be completed in view of the existing CCTV camera. Any strip searches will need an appropriate number of staff in the room.

What happens to confiscated items?

There are specific guidelines for each category of confiscated items listed below

Controlled drugs

These must be delivered to the police as soon as possible. If there is a good reason why this isn't possible, then the drugs must be safely disposed of following government guidelines.

Other substances

A substance that is not illegal/controlled but could be harmful should also either be delivered to the police or disposed of safely.

Alcohol, tobacco, cigarette paper and fireworks

Staff are advised that these can be retained, or disposed of as they feel appropriate but must not be returned to the pupil.

Pornographic material

Confiscation of pornographic images has additional rules on top of just disposal. If an image is confiscated, it must be disposed of unless the staff member has reasonable grounds to suspect it might be related to an offence. In this case, the image must be delivered to the police as soon as possible. School staff must not save, print or copy any images and should not view them intentionally.

Stolen items

If a member of staff finds stolen items, they should either be delivered to the police or given back to the owner if they decide there are good reasons to do so. Staff will refer to government guidelines when deciding whether an item should be returned to its owner or sent to the police.

Weapons or evidence of a suspected offence

These should be delivered to the police as soon as possible.

What about items that individual schools have banned?

These items are identified at the start of this policy. The policy is made available and communicated to parents through the school website. If a banned item is found on a child, staff are advised to use their judgement regarding it. The options suggested in the guidance are to retain the item, dispose of it or return it to the pupil or their parent/carer.

In making a judgement about what to do with a confiscated item that isn't on the prohibited items list but is banned by the school, staff are advised to consider:

- the monetary value of the item
- its potential to further disrupt learning or safety
- whether it is appropriate to return it to the pupil or their parent

Mobile phones

HAPS have a no mobile phone policy and all phones are expected to be handed in on arrival. The phones will be held in a secure location and returned on exit of the school building.

If a mobile phone is confiscated and is suspected to contain files that might cause harm to someone, or that are related to an offence, staff are permitted to search the data on the device. If anything is found, the device should be delivered to the police. The member of staff who confiscates the phone may decide not to search the data themselves if they have concerns about the nature of what might be on the phone. Instead, they may forward the device to the DSL or ADSL, who will have more understanding of what to do in that situation.

What parents need to be aware of

If your child has an item confiscated from them that appears on the prohibited items list, you can expect the school to have followed the guidelines laid out in this policy

Remember that the law protects members of staff who have confiscated items, even if that item becomes damaged or gets lost.

Encourage your child not to take any risks with items that aren't allowed by their school. One way to do this is to ensure your child is clear on what isn't allowed in school and what will happen if they are caught with any banned items. Make sure they understand that you will support the school in confiscation if it arises.

This policy will be reviewed annually in August by the HAPS and agreed by the management committee.