

## **SEARCHING AND CONFISCATION**

*Based on DfE Advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies (July 2013), DfE statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies on Behaviour and Discipline 14.7.11, DfE Advice and Guide for Heads and school staff on Behaviour and Discipline 14.7.11, Running a School Boarding House A Legal Guide, BSA, and current practice.*

*Revised February 2014.*

Teaching staff are authorised in principle to search pupils or their possessions. An individual decision to search will normally be delegated to the Pastoral Deputy Head, but on a trip would be the responsibility of the trip leader.

A pupil can be searched, with his or her agreement, for any item banned under the school rules. Pupils, or their rooms or property may be searched, without consent, where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting the pupil has knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs or stolen items. The search may only be carried out where the pupil is within the care of the school, for example on school property or on school trips.

Any search should be carried out sensitively to protect the privacy and reputation of the pupil. The member of staff conducting the search should be the same sex as the pupil and another member of staff, ideally also the same sex as the pupil, should be present as a witness. In a boarding house, the Boarding Housemaster/mistress would normally conduct the search. In exceptional circumstances, a search of a pupil of the opposite sex or without a witness present may be carried out, but only where it is reasonably believed that there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not conducted immediately, and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff.

Pupils should be asked to empty out their pockets. Pupils may only be asked to remove outer clothing (including gloves, hats). Staff can only search outer clothing. Possessions such as bags and lockable spaces must be searched only in the presence of the pupil.

Any banned or prohibited item found as a result of a search or which they consider harmful or detrimental to school discipline will be confiscated. Tobacco and alcohol must be disposed of. Weapons will be handed to the police; other items will be returned to the parent or destroyed. Controlled or illegal drugs will be passed to the police or destroyed, on the advice of the local police. Stolen items will be returned to the owner where known; if not, high value items will be handed to the police.

This policy will be reviewed when new legislation is published.