



Senior School Policy

Rewards, Behaviour & Discipline Policy

Action	Policy to be reviewed annually		
	Committee	Date	Completed
Reviewed	Deputy Head (Pastoral)	21 August 2024	✓
Reported	Safeguarding Steering Committee	07 November 2024	✓
Approved	Board of Governors	02 December 2024	✓
Next review	Deputy Head (Pastoral)	June 2025	

Good behaviour in schools is central to a good education ([Behaviour in schools](#): advice for headteachers and school staff. *DfE February 2024*). The following policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and anti-bullying policy.

1. Policy Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To enable the Headmaster to carry out their responsibilities of maintaining order and good discipline in the School;
- To promote good behaviour;
- To ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in this School is able to benefit from and make his/her full contribution to the life of the School, consistent always with the needs of the School community;
- To authorise the Senior School Pupil handbook which contains the School Rules and any procedures necessary for implementing them.

2. Senior School Handbook

The Senior School Pupil Handbook and shall set out the principles of the School in relation to:

- Conduct and behaviour
- Self-respect and respect for others
- Respect for property and the environment

Parents will be expected to read the [Senior School Pupil Handbook](#) with their children from time to time. Tutors will be expected to go through elements of it throughout the year. Its principles will be reinforced at assemblies and at other times. Sanctions are contained within the pupil handbook.

3. School Rules

The School Rules shall be set by the Headmaster. The School Rules are necessary:

- For the safety and well-being of everyone at the School;
- For the reputation of the School community as a whole;
- For the protection of School property and the wider environment.

The School Rules apply to all age groups and at all times when the pupil is:

- At school, representing the School or wearing school uniform;
- Travelling to and from school;
- Associated with the School at any time;
- In any way identifiable as a pupil at the school.

Pupils are expected to know and understand the School Rules and to read them through with their parents in the Senior School Pupil Handbook. The School Rules will be amended from time to time and reinforced in Houses, at assemblies and on other appropriate occasions.

4. Scope

The Governors and the Headmaster intend that the School Rules and the sanctions provided in them shall also, in appropriate circumstances, be capable of regulating the conduct of pupils when they are away from school premises and outside the jurisdiction of the School, for example during an exeat or half term and in the holidays. This will normally be where the conduct in question could have repercussions for the orderly running of the School, affects the welfare of a member or members of the School community or a member of the public, or which brings the School into disrepute.

This policy and the Senior School Pupil Handbook containing the School Rules can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

5. Rewarding Good Behaviour

It is an essential part of Gresham's ethos that we seek to perpetuate a culture of praise, encouragement and positive reinforcement amongst staff towards pupils in all fields of School life. We believe that carefully-directed praise is one of the most powerful tools at teachers' disposal for raising achievement and providing a sense of fulfilment for pupils. It also encourages a positive and supportive culture amongst the pupils themselves. Equally, we seek to improve poor performance and attitude in all fields of School life primarily through the guiding care of staff and especially the early intervention of the Housemaster/mistress (HSMs) and Tutors – not through punishment (although this will at times be necessary and appropriate). Therefore, we stress to staff the importance of awarding Merits, criticising pupils' performance and effort constructively, and communicating with the relevant pastoral staff if they are concerned, instead of issuing sanctions or emphasising negative behaviour.

The School is therefore committed to promoting and rewarding excellent effort, achievement and behaviour, and does so in a number of ways, most of which are celebrated in public, either in Chapel or in Houses.

Academic awards and rewards

- Merits for standard of work and for effort
- Bronze, Silver, Gold Merit certificates (termly)
- House Merit Cup (termly)
- House Merit Shield (annually)
- Congratulatory card from the Deputy Head Academic (termly)
- Academic Certificate of Excellence or ACE (annually)
- Speech Day subject prizes (annually)
- Celebration in House or Chapel (ad hoc)

Pastoral rewards

Merits are given for:

- Community spirit
- Honesty
- Kindness
- Respect
- 100% attendance

Co-Curricular awards and rewards

- Merits for contribution

- Sport
- Player of the match announced in Chapel (weekly)
- Most improved player and most valuable player for every school team announced in Final Assembly (termly)
- Regional selection recognised in Chapel; international selection recognised at Speech Day
- Junior, half and full colours (termly) for each major sport
- Speech Day Sports cups
- Music
- Performing Arts awards (annually)
- Outstanding performances recognised in Chapel
- Speech Day Music cups
- ABRSM Grade certificates awarded in House
- Drama
- Performing Arts awards (annually)
- Outstanding performances recognised in Chapel
- Speech Day Drama cups
- LAMDA Grade certificates awarded in House or Chapel
- Duke of Edinburgh Bronze, Silver and Gold awards (annually)
- CCF Speech Day awards
- House Merits
- House colours and cups (annually)

The rationale and procedures for making these awards and rewards are given in full in Appendix 1.

6. Addressing poor behaviour

To flag up behaviour or attitude in need of improvement, staff are asked to log a comment under the appropriate form of behaviour in the 'Behaviour' section of CPOMS. This automatically alerts the Tutor and HSM of the issue. The primary purpose of this is to start a conversation between the pupil and the HSM/Tutor so that the behaviour/attitude may be addressed effectively, any patterns identified over time, and the pupil supported appropriately. This is not a sanction in itself. However, certain instances of poor behaviour will attract a sanction necessarily, and others may be issued at the discretion of the Tutor or HSM.

INSET training will be used regularly to develop and support staff approach to poor behaviour and discipline. Due regard is always given to SEND pupils and those who have joined Gresham's and have not recently been in a school setting for their education.

7. Supporting pupils following poor behaviour

Before and after a sanction the HSM will speak to the pupil and parents to ensure they understand why they have been sanctioned and how to improve their behaviour. Parents are key to that the message can be supported at home. The DSL will always be kept informed of any serious sanctions in case further support is required. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) may also conduct pastoral reviews with the pupil and HSM in cases whereby there is concern that the pupil seems unable to change their behaviour.

In cases of suspension or expulsion, the Head or Deputy Head (Pastoral) will offer support to pupils and parents in conjunction with the HSM.

8. Breaches of School Discipline

Expulsion: Also known as 'permanent exclusion'. A pupil is liable to expulsion for a grave breach of school discipline, for example, a serious criminal offence or some wilful act calculated to cause serious damage to the School, its community or any of its members. Formal expulsion implies that the pupil's name will be expunged from the roll of the School and reference to the facts and circumstances will be made in response to every request for a reference. All outstanding fees up to and including the term of expulsion shall be payable and any deposit shall be retained by the School.

The Headmaster is required to act fairly and in accordance with the principles of natural justice. The Headmaster will make a decision on a case-by-case basis, will expel a pupil from the School only as a last resort and will not expel a pupil other than in grave circumstances. Please see separate policy on [Expulsion, Removal and Review](#).

Requirement to leave: For a serious breach of school discipline falling short of one for which expulsion is necessary, but such that the pupil cannot expect to remain a member of the School Community, the pupil may be required to leave permanently. Subject to payment of all outstanding fees (the deposit being returned or credited to the account) the pupil will be given reasonable assistance in making a fresh start at another school.

Suspension: A pupil may be placed under suspension while a complaint is investigated or as a sanction in its own right. A pupil who cannot go home may receive an 'internal suspension'.

These sanctions above will form part of the pupil's permanent disciplinary record.

Deputy Head's Detention and "gating": A pupil may be in a DH detention or may be "gated" where, in the opinion of the Headmaster or a Deputy Head, either sanction is a reasonable response to a breach of school discipline. Where appropriate, reasonable notice of the detention will be given although this may not always be possible if the following Saturday is within a holiday period. A pupil may be required to miss a fixture to complete the DH detention or may be asked to do it on their return. Parental consent is not required to issue DH detention.

Other sanctions: The Headmaster may prescribe and authorise the use of such other sanctions as comply with good education practice and to promote observance the School Rules.

Corporal punishment: Corporal punishment is not permitted at Gresham's School.

Equality: The School will make reasonable adjustments for managing behaviour which is related to a pupil's special educational need or disability. Where expulsion needs to be considered, the School will ensure that a pupil with a disability or special educational need is able to present their case fully where their disability or special educational needs might hinder this. Any religious requirements affecting the pupil will also be considered.

9. Issuing of Sanctions

School sanctions: any academic member of staff may issue a weekday detention or confiscate a mobile device ensuring they have clearly communicated this with the pupil and explained the reason. The issuing member of staff will record the sanction on SIMS. Other School sanctions such as gating, report cards and Deputy Head's detention can be issued by the HSM in conjunction with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or Deputy Head (Academic). The HSM should record this on SIMS and detail any further notes on CPOMS.

House sanctions: any tutor attached to the boarding house may issue a house sanction but should always inform the HSM as soon as possible. The following list of sanctions is not exhaustive but is indicative of the type and extent of the sanctions issued:

- Early bedtimes for poor behaviour at bedtime or lack of punctuality
- Mobile phone confiscation for handing in a 'dummy' phone or using a device at an inappropriate time
- House community service for not doing duties or leaving an area in an untidy or unsanitary condition
- Prep in the common room for disruptive behaviour during prep time
- Uniform report card for repeatedly not wearing the uniform correctly or for poor appearance
- Meal report card for repeatedly not attending meals

House based sanctions will be logged in house or on SIMS and any concerns discussed with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and noted on CPOMS.

ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) violations

If technology is being used to cyberbully or bring the school into disrepute, the AUP violation will be dealt with in a punitive way as per the appropriate school policy.

If harm is limited exclusively to the user i.e., accessing pornography, adult chat sites then:

HSM to discuss behaviour with pupil and record action on CPOMS

If this behaviour is repeated, the parents will be contacted by the HSM and the pupils' phone will be confiscated for 24 hours

If the behaviour persists, a 5-day phone confiscation, meeting with Tom Burnett (Online safety lead and DDSL) and DHEP will be issued.

If a VPN is being used, a discussion must be had with the pupil in the first instance to ascertain why and to remind them of the AUP. It may be appropriate at this stage to seek the support of the IT department. If VPN use persists, then the device should be confiscated for 24 hours (1st offence), 1 week, parents contacted by HSM and DHEP (2nd offence), meeting with DHP and punishment deemed necessary by her and HSM (3rd offence). At this point, the DHP will consult with the Head to consider the most appropriate sanction in line with the Rewards, Behaviour and Discipline policy.

However, the age of the child and the websites that they are accessing may cause us to vary our approach and will be managed at the HSMs discretion. I.e., the HSM may

wish to contact the parents of a 14-year-old pupil accessing a pornographic website (18+) immediately, rather than waiting for a second offence.

As ever, all actions following an AUP violation must be recorded on CPOMS under the following tabs:

Safeguarding concern-referral to DSLs/online safety concern.

Classroom behaviour management

Teachers will always try to resolve issues with pupils through dialogue and support. However, in some situations it is necessary for teachers to use sanctions. We believe strongly that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe, focused and supportive environment. All pupils should come prepared for lessons, be polite and willing to learn. Merits are given to pupils for both effort and work and behaviour points can be given for no prep, disorganization and disruptive behaviour as well as other issues. It is expected that tutors will review both merits and behaviour points with their tutees and refer them to the HSM if pupils are not seeming to make changes.

Detention can be given by staff either after repeated issues with a pupil's behaviour or late/inadequate prep which have been noted on SIMS. Teachers are also permitted to issue a detention in one-off cases where prep has not been submitted or behaviour has been particularly poor and will follow up with the tutor via CPOMS to explain the rationale. Detentions can be given and sat on the same day.

10. Child-on-child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

We have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment; it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Reports will always be taken seriously and the victim supported and protected. Reports will be managed in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

Incidents will be managed in one of four ways; internally, or with the support of Early Help, or with the support of Children's Social Care, or by reporting to the Police.

When managing reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment, all actions will be regularly reviewed and relevant policies updated. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will always be involved in the process and any risk assessments, additional measures, or arrangements for professional support for pupils.

11. Malicious Allegations Against Staff

Where a pupil makes an accusation against a member of staff and the accusation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Headmaster will consider whether to take disciplinary action in accordance with this policy.

Where a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation, the Headmaster will consider whether to require that parent to withdraw their child or children from the School on the basis that they have treated the School or a member of staff unreasonably.

12. Use of Reasonable Force

Any use of force by staff will be reasonable, proportionate and lawful. Reasonable force will be used in accordance with the DfE guidance *Use of Reasonable Force July 2013* and only when immediately necessary and for the minimum time necessary to prevent a pupil from doing or continuing to do any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property, including their own
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to good order and discipline at the School or among any of its pupils, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom or elsewhere.

Where restraint is used by staff, this is recorded in writing and the pupil's parents will be informed about serious incidents involving the use of force. Force is never used as a form of punishment.

The School's policy on *The Use of Reasonable Force and Restraint* is available on the School website.

13. Searching Pupils – see appendix 2

14. Records

Administration of major punishments are recorded on SIMS, with the name of the pupil concerned, the reason for punishment and the name of the person administering the punishment. Details will also be recorded on CPOMS to ensure a clear line of communication between the pastoral team.

15. Review

A pupil or his/her parents may request a Governor's Review of the Headmaster's decision to expel or require a pupil to leave, or where a decision has been made to suspend a pupil for eleven School days or more, or where suspension would prevent the pupil from taking a public examination. Please see the School's separate [Expulsion, Removal and Review policy](#).

Appendix 1: Rewards and Awards

Academic rewards and awards

1. Merits

Merits are awarded on SIMS to provide an easy, formal way of recording teachers' praise that makes it straightforward for Tutors and HSMs to follow up with pupils and parents. They contribute to a positive Merits tally for the pupil. Merits can be awarded for anything the teacher feels on instinct warrants special praise and should be given freely. When a Merit is given on SIMS, an email is automatically generated to inform the pupil, HSM and Tutor. Tutors are encouraged to send these to the pupil's parents so that they, too, are informed. There are two levels of reward:

- A Merit
- A Triple Merit

Below is a non-exhaustive list of example criteria for academic Merits. Heads of co-curricular activities will provide a similar list if they feel it is necessary in their area. Otherwise, take this list and apply the same principles, and some common sense, to your sport/activity. In SIMS, the options to choose from remain as before, and it has not been possible to change the system nomenclature from 'points' to 'Merits'. Please add a brief reason for your decision in the comments box.

Example criteria for awarding academic Merits and Triple Merits

A Merit for day-to-day academic achievement in School. E.g.:

- Active and excellent participation in a lesson individually or in group work beyond the expected
- Completing a piece of high quality prep beyond the expectations
- Demonstrating a piece of excellent and valuable extended learning outside the classroom
- Moving onto extension tasks in lesson with high quality work completed beforehand
- Marked improvement in content/quality/presentation of work
- Responding to a target set on marked work and improvement subsequently made
- Achieving a score above ability in an in class mini assessment activity
- Assisting another pupil in a lesson or work outside the classroom when they are struggling with work or have a concern

This list is not exhaustive.

A Triple Merit awarded less regularly (say, every 3 weeks or half-term) or for one-off events, to reward performance and effort above and beyond our expectations. E.g.:

- Exceeding expectations for a half termly/termly assessment based on baseline data and teacher professional judgement
- Exceeding Challenge Grade in half termly/term's work based on baseline data and teacher professional judgement
- Leading/Supporting/Assisting a subject area (such as talks/lectures/Open Day – an ambassador for a subject)
- A sustained period of outstanding work in a subject area across a term or half term
- A significant performance in an extended project

This list is not exhaustive.

2. Bronze, Silver, Gold Merit certificates

These are awarded to individuals who gain a certain number of Merits in a term. The colour of the award depends on the number of Merits won. Bronze and Silver certificates are awarded in Houses; Gold in the Final Assembly each term.

3. House Merit Cup

This is awarded in the Final Assembly to the House which has won the most Merits per pupil that term. House Merits are not included in the totals.

4. House Merit Shield

This is awarded at Speech Day to the House which has won the most Merits per pupil in the entire academic year. House Merits are not included in the totals.

5. Congratulatory card from the Deputy Head Academic, Pastoral or Co-curricular

These are handwritten by the Deputy Head to pupils who have been nominated by teaching staff for special recognition of their achievement, effort, attitude or contribution on a termly basis.

6. Academic Certificates of Excellence (ACE)

These are awarded for outstanding achievement in terms of academic performance and effort, recognised in the accrual of three cards from the DHA sent to individual pupils. An ACE may be awarded at any point in the year, and pupils may win more than one in their school career.

7. Speech Day subject prizes

These are awarded by academic departments to the best pupils in their subject.

8. Co-Curricular rewards and awards

1. Merits

The same principles are applied in awarding these as in academic Merits. Single and Triple Merits are available.

2. Sport

a. Player of the Match announced in Chapel – the coach of each team that has recently played a fixture is expected to send a brief match report with a PoM included to the Headmaster for recognition in Chapel

b. Most Improved Player and Most Valuable Player for every school team announced in Final Assembly – certificates awarded for the season's play by the Headmaster.

c. Regional selection recognised in Chapel; international selection recognised at Speech Day – pupils will shake the Headmaster's hand and be applauded by the School.

d. Speech Day Sports cups – awarded for individual excellence in sport

e. Colours

The award of Colours reflects a sustained commitment on the part of the pupil to the spirit of the sport for which they are awarded, above all other considerations. Colours are to be nominated by the Master or Mistress in charge of that sport. The Games Committee may decide to nominate Colours for pupils not in regular school teams but who meet the general criteria set out below. An example of this might be national selection in a minor sport. The Headmaster will ratify all Colours being awarded. The criteria are set out in general terms for team sports. There may be sports, such as shooting, which have their own specific criteria, but these are to reflect the guidelines given here. Colours may be awarded as soon as they are deemed to have been earned. It is quite possible for a pupil to be awarded all three types of Colours during his or her school years.

Full Colours in a sport are awarded for sustained selection and outstanding play for the First team over the period of at least two full seasons. Additionally, they may be awarded for outstanding commitment to a sport, or national recognition or selection in sport. Full Colours are normally only awarded to players in the Upper Sixth, but exceptional circumstances may pertain. Colours are recognised in an awards ceremony, normally as part of a whole-school chapel service. They consist of a tie for boys and a brooch for girls, which can be worn at any time. Half Colours may be awarded in two categories:

- a. To an Upper Sixth pupil for very good play for the First team during a season. Additionally, sustained commitment by an Upper Sixth player to sport in general may also be awarded with half Colours.
- b. Lower Sixth pupils may be awarded with Half Colours for sustained selection and outstanding play for the First team over one full season.

Half Colours are recognised in an awards ceremony, normally as part of a whole-school Chapel service. Junior Colours are awarded for sustained selection and outstanding play in Year 11 (under-16 age group), with that player normally having represented the lower school age groups to a similar standard. If no Year 11 teams routinely exist in a particular sport (for example, girls' hockey) then the award of Colours may be made in Year 10 (under-15 age group). Junior Colours are recognised in an awards ceremony, normally as part of a whole-school Chapel service, and consist of a certificate.

3. Music

- a. Performing Arts awards - These are awarded to students, usually in their Upper Sixth Year, who have been enthusiastically and actively involved in all aspects of music-making and who have been performing to a very high standard.
- b. Outstanding performances recognised in Chapel by the Headmaster
- c. Speech Day Music cups – awarded for individual excellence in music
- d. ABRSM Grade certificates awarded in Houses – public recognition of attainment in instrumental studies

4. Drama

- a. Performing Arts awards - Drama Awards are awarded to students, usually during their Upper Sixth Year, who have leading roles in a number of productions and have performed those roles to a very high standard. This award can be for backstage roles (e.g. lighting or stage management) as well as for acting.
- b. Outstanding performances recognised in Chapel
- c. Speech Day Drama cups - awarded for individual excellence in drama
- d. LAMDA Grade certificates awarded in House or Chapel - public recognition of attainment in individual public-speaking/acting studies

5. Duke of Edinburgh Bronze, Silver and Gold awards (annually) – these are presented in Chapel by the Headmaster

6. CCF Speech Day awards – in recognition of outstanding individual contribution to the CCF

7. House Merits – awarded by HSMs, Tutors and Matrons in recognition of very good individual contribution within the House. Merits and Triple Merits may be awarded.

8. House Colours and Cups – awarded in certain Houses, at the HSM's discretion, in recognition of outstanding and sustained individual contribution and commitment to the House over a period of time.

The Gresham's Diploma and Junior Diploma

This recognises outstanding overall effort, contribution and achievement in all areas of life at Gresham's. It seeks to commend those pupils who have committed themselves fully to the broad model of education that we believe in so fundamentally at Gresham's. Diplomas are awarded annually at three levels for Y11 and Y13 pupils: Diploma, Diploma with Merit, and Diploma with Distinction. Nominations are made by staff in the summer term, rating pupils Good, Very Strong, or Outstanding in their area. These are then approved by HSMs and awarded in Michaelmas after results are in.

To win a Diploma, pupils must be nominated as 'Good' in three of the following four categories:

1. Pleasing academic performance reflecting ability
2. positive contribution to CCF/DofE/Services
3. Positive contribution to art/drama/music/sport
4. Positive role model and record of service including some leadership

To win a Diploma with Merit or Distinction, pupils must be nominated either as 'Very Strong' (Merit) or 'Outstanding' (Distinction) in three of the following four categories:

5. Academic Performance (also consider EE and ToK)
6. DoE Gold/CCF Leadership/Community Service/Volunteer lead
7. Distinction in or merit in contribution to art/drama/music/sport
8. Leadership or ambassador role

Appendix 2: Searching and Confiscation

Searching and confiscation plays an important role in keeping pupils and staff safe. The focus will always be to promote high standards of behaviour to avoid searching and confiscation unless necessary. Pupils have the right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy. When searching does take place the age and needs of the pupils will be considered and reasonable adjustments made. The School may, from time to time, conduct searches across all pupils concurrently if there have been concerns that prohibited items are being kept in pupils' possessions in more than one boarding house. This type of event is not often used but when agreed, is for the safety of the wider community and to maintain disciplinary standards.

All schools have a general power to impose reasonable and proportionate disciplinary measures (Education and Inspections Act 2006). This enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty where it is reasonable to do so. The School's policy on searching and confiscation has regard to guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Searching, Screening and Confiscation July 2022.

All searches and their results will be recorded by the HSM on CPOMS.

1. Prohibited items

The following are "prohibited items" under Section 550ZA(3) of the Education Act 1996 and Regulation 3 of the Schools (Specification and Disposal of Articles) Regulations 2012:

- Knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers, fireworks and pornographic images
- Any article that a member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be used:
 - (i) To commit an offence, or
 - (ii) To cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil) and
- Any item banned by the School rules that are identified as being items which may be searched for.

The School has banned items that are reasonably believed to be likely to cause harm or disruption. Pupils must not have these items in their possession on school premises or at any time when they are in the lawful charge and control of the School (for example, on a school trip).

As provided in the School rules, at Gresham's the following items are banned items that may be searched for if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a pupil has the item in their possession:

- Knives, weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and solvents and their paraphernalia, and stolen items
- Tobacco, cigarette papers, fireworks and pornographic images
- Vapes and related paraphernalia
- Over-the-counter and prescribed medication

2. Searching with consent

Before any search is undertaken, the pupil will usually be asked to consent. In seeking consent, the age and maturity of the pupil will be taken into account together with any special needs the pupil may have. Written consent will not usually be required.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil has an item that is banned by the School, they can instruct the pupil to turn out his or her pockets or bag. If the pupil refuses, the member of staff will always consider why a pupil may not consent. Reasons may include

- They are in possession of a prohibited item
- They do not understand the instruction
- They are unaware of what a search may involve; or
- Have had a previous distressing experience of being searched.

If a pupil continues to refuse to co-operate disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

3. Searching for Prohibited Items

Where the Headmaster or an authorised member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil may have a prohibited item, consent is not required and the search will be carried out, using reasonable force where appropriate.

The Head has authorised the following staff to carry out searches and retain or dispose of items in accordance with this policy:

- All academic members of staff.

Searches will be carried out only on school premises or, if elsewhere, where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, for example on a school trip or in training settings.

When pupils travel outside England on a school trip, they will be required as a condition of participating in the trip to confirm their consent in writing to any search that may be considered necessary by an authorised member of staff during the period in which pupils are outside England.

If it is believed that a pupil has a prohibited item, it may be appropriate for a member of staff to carry out:

- A search of outer clothing and/or
- A search of school property (e.g. pupils' lockers or desks) and/or
- A search of personal property (e.g. bag or pencil case)

Searches will be conducted in such a manner as to minimise embarrassment or distress. Any searches of a pupil or their possessions will be carried out in the presence of the pupil and another member of staff. Where a pupil is searched, the searcher and the second member of staff present will be the same gender as the pupil.

Where it is reasonably believed that serious harm may be caused if the search is not carried out immediately and it is not practicable to summon another member of staff, a member of staff may carry out a search of the pupil of the opposite sex and/or in the absence of a witness.

Whether the Headmaster, or staff authorised by the Headmaster, find anything which they have reasonable grounds for suspecting is a prohibited item, they may seize, retain and dispose of that item in accordance with this policy.

A member of staff's power to search does not enable them to conduct a strip search. Further information can be found here.

4. Confiscation

Under the School's general power to discipline, a member of staff may confiscate, retain or dispose of pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty where it is reasonable to do so.

Confiscation of an item may take place following a lawful search, as set out above, or however the item is found if the member of staff considers it to be harmful or detrimental to school discipline.

5. Searching Electronic Devices

An electronic device such as a mobile phone or a tablet computer may be confiscated in appropriate circumstances in accordance with this policy which has regard to the Computer Misuse Act 1990 and DofE guidance Screening, Searching and Confiscation – Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies [DfE], July 2022. If there is good reason to suspect that the device has been, or could be used to cause harm, to disrupt teaching or break school rules, any data or files on the device may be searched, and, where appropriate, data or files may be erased before the device is returned to its owner. Any data or files will only be erased, if there is good reason to suspect that the data or files have been, or could be used to cause harm, to disrupt teaching or break school rules.

If inappropriate material is found on an electronic device, the member of staff may delete the material, retain it as evidence of a breach of school discipline or criminal offence or hand it over to the police if the material is of such seriousness that police involvement is required.

6. Disposal of Confiscated Items

Alcohol: Alcohol which has been confiscated will be destroyed.

Controlled drugs: Controlled drugs will usually be delivered to the police as soon as possible. In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Headmaster or authorised member of staff, the drugs may be destroyed without the involvement of the police if there is good reason to do so. All relevant circumstances will be taken into account and staff will use professional judgement to determine whether the items can be safely disposed of. They will not be returned to the pupil.

Other substances: Substances which are not believed to be illegal drugs, but which are harmful or detrimental to good order and discipline (for example, "legal highs") may be confiscated and destroyed. Where it is not clear whether or not the substance seized is an illegal drug, it will be treated as though it is illegal and disposed of as above.

Stolen items: Stolen items will usually be delivered to the police as soon as possible. However, if, in the opinion of the Headmaster or authorised member of staff, there is good reason to do so, stolen items may be returned to the owner without the involvement of the police. This is likely to apply to items of low value, such as pencil cases.

Tobacco or cigarette papers: Tobacco or cigarette papers will be destroyed.

Fireworks: Fireworks will not be returned to the pupil. They will be disposed of safely at the discretion of the Head or other authorised member of staff which may include donation to an appropriate charity.

Pornographic images: Pornographic images involving children or images that constitute "extreme pornography" under section 63 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 will be handed to the police as soon as practicable. As possession of such things may indicate that the pupil has been abused, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will also be notified and will decide whether to make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Norfolk County Council's children's services.

Other pornographic images will also be discussed with the School's DSL. The images may then be passed to the LADO for consideration of any further action. If no action is to be taken by the local authority, the images will be erased after a note has been made for disciplinary purposes, confirming the nature of the material.

Article to be used to commit an offence or to cause personal injury or damage to property: Such articles may, at the discretion of the Headmaster or authorised member of staff taking all the circumstances into account, be delivered to the police, returned to the owner, retained or disposed of.

Weapons or items which are evidence of an offence: Such items will be passed to the police as soon as possible.

An item banned under school rules: Such items may, at the discretion of the Headmaster or authorised member of staff taking all the circumstances into account, be returned to its owner, retained or disposed of. Where staff confiscate a mobile phone that has been used in breach of school rules to disrupt teaching, the phone will be given to their HSM for a period of 24 hours. If a pupil persists in using a mobile phone in breach of school rules, the phone will be confiscated and returned to a parent.

Electronic devices: If it is found that a mobile phone, laptop or tablet computer or other electronic device has been used to cause harm, disrupt teaching or break school rules, including carrying out cyberbullying, the device will be confiscated and may be used as evidence in discipline proceedings. Once the proceedings have been concluded the device will be returned to a parent or carer and the pupil may be prohibited from bringing such a device onto school premises or on school trips. In serious cases, the device may be handed to the police for investigation.

7. Use of Force

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.

Associated Resources:

[Use of Reasonable Force – advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies](#)

8. Communication with Parents

There is no legal requirement for the School to inform parents before a search for banned or prohibited items takes place or to seek their consent to search their child and it will not generally be practicable to do so. However, we will inform parents of any search that takes place where any items that have been found. In appropriate cases we will consult parents on how the School should dispose of certain items.

We will keep a record of searches carried out which can be inspected by the parents of the pupil(s) involved subject to any restrictions under the Data Protection Act 1998. The record will include:

- Date, time and location of search
- Pupil name
- Who conducted the search and any other adults or pupils present
- Reason for search
- Item being searched for
- What items, if any, where found
- Follow up action

Complaints about searching or confiscation will be dealt with through the School's Complaints Procedure. A copy of the procedure is posted on the School website and hard copies are available from the Headmaster's office on request.

The School will take reasonable care of any items confiscated from pupils. However, unless negligent or guilty of some other wrongdoing causing injury, loss or damaging, the School does not accept responsibility for loss of damage to property.