

St Richard's Catholic College

SEARCHING, SCREENING AND CONFISCATION POLICY



The Policy was approved by the Governing Body: September 2018

Chair of Governors: _____

The Governing Body will review the policy in September 2010

Searching, screening and confiscation policy

This policy has been prepared in accordance with:

DfE Guidance, Searching, screening and confiscation (Advice for Principals, school staff and governing bodies) January 2018

DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools: January 2016

DfE Use of reasonable force guidelines before searching pupils. Schools should also consider whether staff should receive further training

At St Richard's Catholic College we want to ensure that all children, staff and visitors are safe from harm and threats of harm.

There are a broad range of items which, if brought into a school setting, or in the possession of a child or young person could compromise the health and safety of the individual pupil, other pupils, staff or visitors to the school.

Items prohibited by legislation (DfE guidance January 2018)

- Knives or weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- 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 pupil)
- The Principal and authorised staff can also search for any item banned by the school rules, which have been identified in the rules as an item that can be searched for.

For the purposes of this policy – the definition of 'knife' includes any bladed article including – craft knife, Stanley knife, Swiss army knife, fishing knife, razors, kitchen knives or any other bladed item.

The term 'weapon' refers to any gun, including Air Rifles, BB gun, Toy Gun, Pellet Gun, Cross bow, Taser, Blowpipe, Knuckleduster or any similar item and includes any item made for the purposes of assault or defence.

The policy is not constrained by the criminal definition of an offensive weapon. It refers to any item that could cause harm, injury or distress to the holder or others, or which could be used to threaten, alarm, distress or intimidate others

Unauthorised items

In addition to the prohibited items identified above and detailed in the DfE Screening, Searching and Confiscation guidelines, there are a number of other items which could cause 'harm, distress or injury to pupils or persons, or adversely affect good order and discipline of the school community' (**DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Jan 2016**)

St Richard's Catholic College consider the following items to be inappropriate and therefore they must not be brought into school. These items can also be searched for without the consent of the pupil if necessary.

- Chains
- Catapults
- Lighters/matches
- Tools (screwdriver, hammer nails etc.)
- Pepper Sprays and Gas canisters
- Any item fashioned to cause injury i.e a sharpened stick, shard of glass
- Laser pens
- Mobile phones, when in contravention of school rules
- Age inappropriate media in any form
- Dangerous chemicals (acids, hair dyes, bleaches, nail varnish remover etc.)
- Stink Bombs
- Solvents
- Needles (Syringes if required for medical grounds should be kept in accordance with the pupils' care plan and our drugs/medical policy)
- Offensive material – pornography, racist, homophobic, extremist material (in any medium)
- Rope and cable ties

This is not an exhaustive list and the Principal may consider other items as inappropriate if she believes that the possession of the item is to cause harm, distress or injury to another.

Incidents outside of school

St Richard's Catholic College consider that the items detailed in this policy both those prohibited as identified in the DfE guidance 2018 and those identified by the school are inappropriate. Possession of such items in school, on the journey to and from school, on a school trip or any extra curriculum activity – on or off the school premises – is unacceptable. The response to any pupil found with or believed to have possession of such items will be managed in accordance with this policy.

Screening – what the law says:

The law allows schools to require pupils to undergo screening by a walk-through or hand held metal detector, arch or wand, even if they do not suspect them of having a weapon and without the consent of the pupils and/or parents.

Any member of staff can screen pupils

Searching and confiscation

If a member of staff suspects that, a pupil is in possession of a prohibited item or an item identified as inappropriate by the school the pupil may be searched without their consent. This search should be conducted by the Principal, or a member of staff authorised by the Principal (this would normally be the Vice-Principal or a member of the Senior Leadership Team) The search should be conducted by a member of staff who is the same gender as the pupil, and with another adult, where possible of the same gender. Before any search is undertaken, consent will be sought from the pupil. If consent is refused, the pupil will be asked to say why he/she has refused. Refusal to allow a search would be a breach of the school behaviour policy (refusal to follow a staff member's instructions) and would have a sanction imposed. There is a limited exception to this rule.

You can carry out a search of a pupil of the opposite sex to you and / or without a witness present, but only where you reasonably believe that there is a risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if you do not conduct the search immediately and where it is not reasonably practicable to summon another member of staff.

A member of staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances when conducting a search for knives or weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs or stolen items (**referred to in the legislation and in this policy as 'prohibited items'**) Such force cannot be used when searching for items banned under the school rules.

When being searched, pupils cannot be required to remove their socks or tights, shirts, trousers or skirt; they may only be required to remove 'outer clothing' such as coats and jumpers. Searching the pupil's possessions includes searching a pupil's goods over which he/she has or appears to have control. Searches will be conducted in such a manner as to minimise embarrassment or distress. When items are found, they can be confiscated if it is reasonable to do so and they are not allowed under school rules. Where any article is thought to be a weapon, illegal drug or stolen property it must be passed to the Police.

It is not necessary to inform parents/carers before or after a search takes place or to seek their consent to search their child. Where objects are found and when the object constitutes a significant breach of the school rules, especially a 'prohibited item', the individual pupil's parents or carers should be contacted and the item confiscated.

The Principal or the Vice-Principal will follow the School's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, including referrals to Children's Social Care or other agencies as required.