



SEARCH POLICY

This policy has been written with reference to Screening, Search and Confiscation: advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (DfE Guidance 2019)

Aims: It is expected that pupils at Duke of Kent School will co-operate with supervising adults during investigations and enquiries such that searches will need to be conducted only in exceptional circumstances. This policy sets out the principles and procedures by which searches of pupils' person and possessions, and School premises, should be conducted.

1. General Principles

- 1.1 Any searches will only take place where there is reasonable suspicion that unauthorized, illegal or stolen items are being held.
- 1.2 Any searches should be proportionate to the value/risk of the item in question and the extent of the search should be proportionate to the likelihood of the item being found.
- 1.3 Details of all searches should be noted by those conducting the search: this should include times, persons present, anything said and by whom, location and any relevant context. Notes should be given to the Head, Deputy Head or Head of Section on completion of the search.
- 1.4 Pupils have a right to respect for their private life. They have a right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy.

2. Search of pupil's person or personal property

- 2.1 Any search of a pupil's person or personal property (clothing, bags, pencil cases etc.) can only be conducted with a pupil's consent. Refusal to consent will be dealt with as at Section 4 below.
- 2.2 The pupil should be present when personal property (clothing, bags, pencil cases etc.) is searched.
- 2.3 At least two members of the staff should be present during the search and the search should be carried out in the most sympathetic, thorough and efficient manner possible with due attention to the dignity of the person whose possessions are being searched.
- 2.4 If anything suspicious is found a detailed record of what is found and where it is found should be made.
- 2.5 If anything suspicious is found, the pupil should be asked:
 - Is this yours?
 - What is it?

The answers should be carefully noted. The pupil should confirm that the answers are correct by initialing the answers recorded.

2.6 No attempt to question the pupil further should be made until a parent, guardian, or other appropriate adult (not associated with the school) is present.

2.7 The pupil should be given the opportunity after the search to telephone parents or guardian in private.

2.8 Both members of staff who have carried out the search should read the notes made of the search and if they agree that the notes are a correct record they should sign them. Any alterations or additions to the notes should be noted. Notes should be given to the Head, Deputy Head or Head of Section on completion of the search.

2.9 The pupil's parents will be informed that a search has taken place and of its outcome. If the matter is considered serious enough, the Police will be called. The decision to call the Police will be taken by a member of the Senior Management Team.

3. Search of School Premises/Property

3.1 Consent should be sought whenever possible but is not a pre-requisite for search; pupils should be informed of this.

3.2 Searches of School property (e.g. lockers) may take place in a pupil's absence and locked storage may be forcibly opened where there is a strong suspicion of illegal or unauthorized items.

3.3 The pupil and the pupil's parents will be informed of any search that has taken place and of its outcome. If the matter is considered serious enough, the Police will be called. The decision to call the Police will be taken by a member of the Senior Management Team.

4. In the event consent to search is withheld:

4.1 Every effort should be made to encourage a pupil to give consent (not least to clear his or her name); where necessary a pupil's parent or guardian should be contacted to encourage the pupil to give consent.

4.2 Where consent is withheld, the Head or Deputy will be informed and disciplinary measures proportionate to the circumstances, which may involve calling the Police, will be taken.

5. Items confiscated following search

5.1 Unauthorised items will be returned to parents

5.2 Illegal items may be handed to the Police, at the discretion of the Head

6. Digital items

6.1 Searches of digital items (mobile phones, cameras, laptops etc) will be subject to the same principles.

Person responsible for this policy: The Head

Reviewed: September 2021

Next review: September 2022