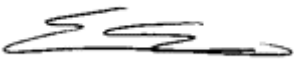




# St. Helen's Catholic Primary School

---

## SCREEN & SEARCH POLICY

Policy Type	Recommended
Review Period	Biennial
Date of last review	Summer 2025
Next review	Autumn 2027
Approved by Governing Body and signed by Elsa Corr, Chair of Governors	
Date	10 July 2025
Published on St Helen's Website	

# POLICY FOR SCREENING & SEARCHING

## Our Mission

Respect yourself.

Respect everyone in our school community.

Respect everyone in our local community.

Respect everyone in our global community.

But most of all, respect God our Father in Heaven.

## Aims of the policy

This policy aims:

- to outline the rationale behind the foundation's approach to screening and searching students
- to give an overview of the processes in place for effective screening and searching
- to ensure that these processes and procedures comply with current legislation
- to ensure that the dignity and well-being of each student is protected
- to ensure that students, staff and home settings are fully aware of the foundation's approach to Screening & Searching

This policy is written in light of and should be read in conjunction with the school's Learning About Me Policy, Rights & Responsibilities Policy, Impact & Consequences Policy and Child Protection Policy.

This policy was written in line with the government guidance Searching, Screening and Confiscation.

This policy recognises that

1. certain prohibited items present a clear risk to the health, wellbeing and safety of our pupils and staff. This policy is in place to protect pupils, staff and visitors to the site
2. pupils are vulnerable to the influence of social media and that this may adversely impact on their understanding of what is appropriate and inappropriate
3. sometimes children will try to "smuggle in" prohibited items
4. some prohibited items represent a distraction for the students, eg mobile phones. The school has a policy for bringing mobile phones onto the site which states that pupils in Year 6 are permitted to bring in their phones and leave them in the locked box in their classrooms during the school day.
5. it is illegal for the majority of items prohibited on-site to be in the childrens' possession, eg knives, edibles
6. it is vital that educational establishments consider their obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. Under Article 8, pupils have a right to respect for their private life. In the context of these rights and obligations, this means that pupils have the right to expect a reasonable level of personal privacy. The right under Article 8 is not absolute; it can be interfered with, but any interference with this right by an educational establishment (or any public body) must be justified and proportionate

## Searching & Screening

At St. Helen's, searching and screening is implemented rarely and only when a pupil demonstrates an abuse of the trust of the school. It is a vital measure to safeguard and promote pupil and staff welfare, and to uphold the rights and responsibilities that all stakeholders have for the safety of others in ensuring that pupils can learn and thrive.

**Searching** is the act of being "patted down" and having the contents of bags and/or pockets explored.

**Screening** is the act of using an electric hand-held wand to detect metal, for example, weapons or vapes.

Where a pupil has demonstrated an abuse of trust of the school, they will be searched and screened every morning on arrival at school as part of a wider safeguarding plan to protect both them and other pupils and staff. This is reviewed and agreed with pupils periodically in order to protect the safety of every individual. Pupils understand why the process is in place and that it is fair when the trust of the school has been abused.

Only members of the school's Senior Leadership Team or Senior Management Team may conduct a search. All members of staff are authorised by the Headteacher under the remit of this policy to search for any and all prohibited items that may be deemed to constitute a threat to the safety of the pupils, staff and visitors to the school if they suspect that trust has been breached.

The list of prohibited items, as defined in subsection (3) of Section 550ZA of the Education Act 1996, is

- knives and weapons;
- alcohol;
- illegal drugs;
- stolen items;
- 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 property of; any person (including the student) an article specified in The Schools (Specification and Disposal of Articles) Regulations 2012:
- tobacco and cigarette papers;
- e-cigarettes and vapes
- fireworks; and
- pornographic images.

Being in possession of a prohibited item – especially knives, weapons, illegal drugs or stolen items – may mean that the pupil is involved, or at risk of being involved, in anti-social or criminal activity including gang involvement, and in some cases may be involved in child criminal exploitation. A search may play a vital role in identifying pupils who may benefit from early help or a referral to the local authority children's social care services.

Members of staff searching a pupil may not be the same sex as the pupil. This is because the majority of items expected to be brought on-site would constitute a threat to the safety of the pupils, staff and visitors to the school.

Screening and searching will always take place in the office of a member of the Senior Leadership Team with multiple members of staff present.

Where a pupil resists a search, members of staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances when conducting a search for knives or weapons, or articles that have been or could be used to commit an offence or cause harm.

On arrival, the identified pupil is screened using a handheld battery-operated metal detector. Different members of the senior leadership team or senior management team, as outlined above, will be assigned this duty each day.

Once the pupil has been screened, where appropriate, they are lightly patted down by a nominated member of staff to search for items that may have been missed by the metal detector.

If the member of staff “patting down” suspects that the pupil is concealing a prohibited item, they may ask them to turn out their pockets or take off their shoes.

## **After screen and search**

Once staff are satisfied that a pupil has not concealed a prohibited item, the pupil will be permitted on-site and will go straight to their class.

## **What happens to items that are confiscated?**

As stated above, there are some items which must be delivered to the police, although in the case of a weapon, depending on the nature of the weapon, these may be photographed and returned to the family of the pupil.

All mobile phones are locked in a box and retained by Year 6 staff until the end of the day when they are returned to the pupils. Where a pupil in a younger year group brings a phone onto the premises, these will be held by the office and returned to families at the earliest available opportunity.

## **Recording searches**

Screen and search is only used rarely in cases where pupils have abused the trust of the school. It is anticipated that this process will last for a minimum of 12 weeks and a maximum of 24 weeks, depending on the severity of the incident. All daily searches will be recorded on the safeguarding drive by a member of SLT and the log uploaded to CPOMS on completion of the designated period.

## **Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored regularly by the Senior Leadership Team and is reviewed annually by the Headteacher.