# SEARCH AND CONFISCATION POLICY

Consent, safeguarding, lawful authority and safe handling of items

**EFFECTIVE: SEPTEMBER 2026 | REVIEW: SEPTEMBER 2027 | IMPACT AP**

## 1 | SCOPE AND LIMITS OF AUTHORITY

Protect people from unsafe items while respecting privacy and dignity. Impact currently operates commissioned AP and must not assume that statutory school search powers apply to its staff. Kate Willis must establish lawful authority before any proposed non-consensual search. A commissioner's policy or parental placement agreement does not automatically confer a statutory power on Impact.

## 2 | PREVENTION AND EXPECTATIONS

Explain prohibited or unsafe items through induction and individual risk planning, including weapons, illegal substances and items used to threaten or harm. Staff model calm, proportionate responses. Phones or other belongings collected under agreed routines must be stored securely and returned through a recorded process; routine collection is not authority to examine private content.

## 3 | IMMEDIATE THREAT

If a weapon, suspected drug or dangerous item creates an immediate risk, move others to safety, call appropriate emergency assistance and alert the DSL. Do not confront, restrain or attempt a search that increases danger. Any physical action must have its own lawful justification, be necessary and proportionate, and follow training and safeguarding procedures.

## 4 | VOLUNTARY COOPERATION

Where safe, explain the concern and ask the learner to hand over an item or voluntarily show relevant belongings. Use accessible language, allow processing time and consider communication, trauma and SEND needs. Consent must be meaningful and not obtained by humiliation or threats. A parent's general consent does not replace consideration of the learner's rights.

## 5 | PRIVACY AND WITNESSES

Use a suitable private location, appropriate staff and a witness wherever practicable; consider the learner's wishes and safeguarding needs. Staff must not carry out strip searches, require removal of intimate clothing or touch intimate areas. Police conduct any police search under their own powers and safeguards. Record who was present and why the approach was chosen.

## 6 | REFUSAL OR UNCERTAINTY

If consent is refused or authority is unclear, stop the proposed voluntary search, maintain supervision and assess risk. Consult the Principal, DSL, commissioner or police as appropriate. Do not treat refusal as proof that the allegation is true. Agree a safe next step and continued learning; never leave a child unsupervised or send them away without a safe handover.

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## 7 | ITEMS HANDED OVER OR SECURED

Record the item, owner, reason, date, staff involved, storage and intended return or lawful disposal. Use a receipt where practicable. Keep medicines accessible through healthcare arrangements rather than routine confiscation. Handle weapons, suspected controlled drugs or hazardous materials only as directed by police or relevant specialist advice; protect evidence and do not test substances.

## 8 | DEVICES AND DIGITAL EVIDENCE

Do not browse a learner's phone, messages or images merely because the device is held. Establish lawful authority and a safeguarding purpose and seek police advice where crime or illegal imagery may be involved. Never copy, forward or download sexual images of children. Preserve device details and the report; follow Online Safety and Child Protection procedures.

## 9 | RECORDING AND COMMUNICATION

Record the concern, consent discussion, lawful basis, immediate safety steps, outcome, witness, notifications and follow-up. Tell the DSL about searches or incidents raising child-welfare concerns. Inform parents and commissioners appropriately unless doing so would increase risk or conflict with agency advice. Support the learner and review any distress or discriminatory impact.

## 10 | RETURN, REVIEW AND CHALLENGE

Return lawful belongings promptly when the safety reason ends, with clear arrangements for collection. Explain unresolved retention or referral decisions. Kate reviews incidents and staff practice; concerns about Kate follow the independent governor route. Learners and families can challenge handling through Complaints without losing access to safeguarding support.

## 11 | POLICY CONTROL AND REVIEW

Policy owner: Kate Willis, Principal and Proprietor. Effective date: September 2026. Scheduled review: September 2027, or sooner after relevant changes, incidents or feedback. Record actual governance approval and implementation decisions and brief staff on their duties. These policy dates do not assert that approval, staff training or operational checks have already occurred. Use the Complaints or independent reporting route for concerns about implementation.

## 12 | SOURCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

DfE: Searching, screening and confiscation (July 2022) explains school powers; applicability must be checked for AP.

gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation

Check current versions and apply according to Impact's legal and commissioning status.