



The Wilnecote School

Title of Policy: Searching, Screening and Confiscation (including Electronic Devices)

Member of leadership team with lead responsibility for oversight and update of policy	S. Simpson
Approved at SLT	September 2026
Approved at Governing Body	September 2026
Policy approval date	September 2026
Policy review cycle	Bi-annually
Policy review date	September 2028

The Wilnecote School is committed to maintaining a safe, secure and positive learning environment for all students, staff and visitors. Students must not bring prohibited or unauthorised items onto the school site. The school has a duty to take appropriate action where there are concerns that a student may be in possession of an item that could pose a risk to themselves or others, compromise the safety of the school community, or breach the school's behaviour expectations.

The school may exercise its statutory powers to search students and their possessions, with or without consent where permitted by law, and may confiscate items where this is lawful and appropriate. All searches will be conducted in accordance with current Department for Education guidance on searching, screening and confiscation, with due regard for the safety, welfare and dignity of those involved.

Where the Headteacher, or a member of staff authorised by the Headteacher, has reasonable grounds to suspect that a student is in possession of a prohibited item, or another item identified within the school's Behaviour Policy as an item that may be searched for, the school may undertake a search of the student or their possessions in accordance with statutory guidance.

Items which may be prohibited or subject to the school's searching arrangements include, but are not limited to:

- Knives or weapons.
- Alcohol.
- Illegal drugs.
- Stolen property.
- Tobacco and vaping products.
- Fireworks.
- Pornographic images.
- Items which may have been used, or may be intended to be used, to cause injury, commit an offence or damage property.
- Mobile phones and other smart devices where identified in the school's published policy as items that may be searched for.
- Other items prohibited by the school's behaviour rules.

We therefore reserve the right to request students to let us search them should concerns be raised, as much to clear them of any wrong doing as to identify and then deal appropriately with an item they should not have.

Our searching, screening and confiscation policy is based on the following principles:

- Should a student be identified as needing to be searched, a search is always conducted in a way that aims to maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.
- Wherever possible, searches involving a pupil will be undertaken by a member of staff who is the same sex as the pupil and in the presence of a witness. In exceptional circumstances, where there is a risk of serious harm and it is not reasonably practicable to wait for a member of staff of the same sex, a search may be conducted in accordance with current DfE guidance.

- Only members of staff who are trained and designated to do so by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher may undertake a search. There will be another member of staff present as a witness to the search.
- The school will usually seek the cooperation and consent of students before undertaking a search. However, authorised staff may search a pupil or their possessions without consent where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil is in possession of a prohibited item or other item that the school rules identify as prohibited.
- Electronic devices may contain evidence of prohibited items, criminal activity, safeguarding concerns or behaviour that may place individuals at risk of harm. Where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion, authorised staff may examine data or files on a device in accordance with DfE guidance. The school may request that a student unlock a device to facilitate this process.
- If a student refuses to be searched or screened, the school reserves the right to refuse the student permission to enter the school site and to issue sanctions as deemed proportionate and appropriate.
- Where a student refuses to comply with a reasonable search request, the school will consider all available information, including the refusal itself, when making decisions regarding any safeguarding response, risk management measures or disciplinary action. Any action taken will be proportionate, reasonable and in accordance with school policies.
- Where prohibited items are found, the school will deal with them in accordance with DfE guidance. Items such as knives, offensive weapons, controlled drugs and indecent images will normally be passed to the police. Other items may be retained, disposed of or returned to parents as appropriate and lawful.
- A written record will be maintained of all searches involving prohibited items, searches conducted without consent, and any search that gives rise to a safeguarding concern. Records will include the reason for the search, those present, the outcome and any subsequent actions taken.
- Parents are informed of all reported incidents that give rise to a particular concern.
- The Deputy Headteacher or a member of SLT will inform parents. If they are not available, the next most senior member of staff will carry out this duty.
- Staff will consider any individual needs, vulnerabilities or safeguarding concerns prior to undertaking a search, including the SEND status, communication needs and any known trauma or adverse experiences of the pupil.

Searching, Screening and Confiscation

Advice for schools

July 2022

The school follows the most recent version of the Department for Education's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools and will update its procedures in line with any future revisions to statutory or non-statutory guidance. Please refer to this document using the link for more detailed guidance.

[Searching, Screening and Confiscation - July 2022](#)