

FORT HILL INTEGRATED COLLEGE



SEARCHING AND **CONFISCATION POLICY**

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SEARCHING AND CONFISCATION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

In Fort Hill Integrated College there may be occasions when a member of staff suspects that a pupil may have a **prohibited item**. Prohibited items are:

- 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 staff authorised by the Principal, can also search for any item banned by the school rules which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for.

POLICY AND PRACTISE

Searching with consent

School staff, authorised by the Principal, can search pupils with their consent for any prohibited item. The following protocols must be adhered to:

- There are two members of staff present for any search, at least one of the same gender as the pupil.
- The pupil has been requested by the staff member to co-operate to the search and they have agreed.
- Items from pockets/bags are placed on a surface that is visible to all parties present.
- The search takes place in a location out of view from other pupils and staff.
- Any prohibited items found during the search are confiscated and dealt with appropriately.

Searching without consent

If a pupil refuses consent for a search to take place the Principal, or a member of staff that he/she authorises, can detain the pupil to contact home:

- Parent/guardian will be asked for their permission to allow the search to take place.
- At this point information regarding the suspicion of the prohibited item would be shared to enable the parent/guardian to make an informed decision.
- Parent/guardian may be requested to come to school to be a witness to the search if the pupil continues to refuse staff.

If the parent/guardian refuses for the search to take place the pupil is to be detained and the PSNI are to be contacted to assist with an enforced search.

After the search

- Prohibited items or those that are evidence in relation to an offence will be recorded and confiscated. Items such as lighters/matches, cigarettes, tobacco, rolling skins, e-cigarettes must not be returned to the pupil but kept in the office. Parents should be informed of the confiscated items and be afforded the opportunity of collecting these items or request that school staff dispose of them.
- Where a person conducting a search finds a controlled drug, these must be delivered to the police as soon as possible but may be disposed of by the Principal if directed by police.
- Any weapons or items which are evidence of an offence must be passed to the police as soon as possible.

***Source:** Department for Education (Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies) January 2018*