



Clapton Girls' Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Searching & Screening Policy

Coordinator	Dominic Fyles
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Agreed by Trustees on	N/A
This policy is communicated by the following means:	
Trustees	Via committees and meetings
Staff	Policy folders on staff SharePoint
Parents	Website
Students	Website

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Context and introduction

The policy is based on the latest guidance from the Department for Education Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools 2022 guidance.

At Clapton Girls' Academy relationships between students and staff are positive. Staff treat students with respect and comply with national professional standards. Staff also expect that students do not bring in items prohibited under legislation covered by the DfE (2022) and items banned by the academy's Behaviour for Learning policy (no. 34). This policy has been designed as guidance for staff when needing to conduct a search for any items covered under the guidance and policy.

The following policy gives details about the process that staff should use when searching a student for items prohibited by legislation under the DfE guidance (2022) and items prohibited by the academy's Behaviour for Learning policy (no. 34) when consent is given by a student.

For reference, the DfE list prohibited items to include:

- Knives and weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and Cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Any article that has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage property

This process detailed below does not cover additional actions that can be taken when a student doesn't consent to a search. If no consent is given, we will ask parents to attend the academy before any search is conducted. If, however, there are reasonable safety concerns relating to a DfE prohibited item, Judicium Education consultants advise that additional actions that should be considered are those covered under the academy's Reasonable Force policy (no. 37).

This policy should be read in context and with reference to the academy's Behaviour for Learning Policy (no.34), Child Protection, Safeguarding Children and Promoting Welfare Policy (no.14), SEND policy (no. 24) and Suspensions policy (no. 39).

In this policy, all references to 'parent/s' include parent/s, carer/s and any other person with parental responsibility for a student at Clapton Girls' Academy.

Aim of this policy

- To clarify the process that staff should use when searching for a prohibited or banned item.
- To clarify the process that staff should use when searching a student's phone.
- To ensure the academy's processes are in line with current DfE legislation.



1. Searching

When searching a student, all staff must follow the principles of our Child Protection, Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare policy (no.14), which states:

The academy acknowledges that all staff working in, or on behalf of, the academy community are in a unique position to identify and ensure early help for vulnerable students and those who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. Staff take appropriate and timely action to ensure that students are kept safe in, and outside of, the academy.

All students, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to be protected from harm and can expect us to provide them with a safe and secure environment.

The academy adopts a multi-agency approach to safeguarding, working with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Throughout this policy, the term 'search' will be used to mean a search of a student's outer garments and belongings. This could include the student's blazer, coat, locker, school bag/s and asking them to empty any pockets in their uniform e.g. trouser pockets.

This is a 'no direct contact' approach to searching and staff should not touch students when conducting searches. In practice, this will mean a member of the Leadership Team will ask a student to turn out the pockets of their clothes items and empty their bag. Where necessary, the member of the Leadership Team conducting the search may need to touch the student's bag or blazer as part of the search.

A search of a student will be carried out if staff have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student is in possession of a prohibited item, or any item identified in the school rules for which a search can be made.

Only female members of the Leadership Team may conduct a search.

Searches may be carried out on school premises or on a school visit.

By law, a member of the Leadership Team can search students with their consent for any item.

If suspected of being in possession of an item banned by the academy rules, a member of the Leadership Team can search students for any item with or without consent.

Should a student not consent to a search, parents will be invited to attend the academy to meet with the student and a member of the Leadership Team.

If no banned item is found following a school search, no further searches will be carried out.



2. Guidance for staff conducting searches

A female member of the Leadership Team carrying out a search:

1. Must contact parents before conducting a search, explaining the reason for the search. If no contact can be made, the child must be supervised by an adult until contact is made. For example, in a Head of Year office or in the Student Support Centre.
2. Must have another member of staff present for the duration of the search.
3. Must locate a quiet room to conduct the search, out of the view of other students. Ideally, this would be a Head of Year or Leadership office but an empty classroom could also be suitable.
4. May not ask a student to remove any item of clothing other than their school blazer and/or an outer layer of clothing being worn as a coat or jacket.
5. May ask for gloves and hats to be removed and turned inside out.
6. May confiscate and retain anything they suspect is banned by the academy, dangerous, or which could be used as evidence in relation to an offence, if they discover this during a search.
7. Any items confiscated during a search must then be passed to the Headteacher, who will decide whether the item should be disposed of, handed to parents or submitted to the police.
8. Is advised to photograph any confiscated items where an offence may have been committed or when evidence of the confiscated items is likely to be needed e.g. as evidence for a suspension.
9. Must ensure that following a search and the identification of banned items, the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead is informed so that they can discuss safeguarding concerns with parents and, with parents' consent, contact local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for advice on suitable support for the student.
10. Must ensure that following a search, the details of the search* are logged on the open case spreadsheet by emailing them to the Child Protection (CP) administrator via safeguarding@clapton.hackney.sch.uk.
11. Must ensure that in all circumstances the safeguarding of students is paramount. Therefore, if at any time, the member of Leadership Team feels that there is an immediate and significant risk to a student, intervention may be needed prior to parental consent being obtained.

*CP admin staff must log the following information: name of child, year group, reason for search, staff member conducting search, student consent, outcome of search, contact with parent and any relevant follow up e.g., Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub referral.

The searching log will be monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the headteacher and will be reviewed by trustees at their termly safeguarding meeting.



3. Searching a mobile phone

A student mobile phone may be confiscated to enable staff to search for photographs and messages relating to bullying, or the sharing of a Youth Produced Sexual Image/video (YPSI), or a child sexual abuse image/video (CSA).

These two situations require a swift safeguarding response to protect the victims involved (including students who may have been sent YPSI or CSA imagery) and reduce the risk of harm to students. In these instances, the following process will be followed:

3a. Bullying incidents

1. An attempt will be made to contact parents of students identified as possibly being in possession of an image, video or evidence of bullying, to advise that staff need to see the contents of camera rolls and/or messages.
2. If a parent is not contactable, the search may proceed without consent to safeguard children in the academy.
3. If a parent is not contacted, a message will be left with parents before the search, and a follow up call will be made after the search.
4. A search of phone camera rolls and/or messages, will be conducted by a female member of the safeguarding or Leadership Team, with the student who owns the phone present. Another member of staff will be present to monitor the search.
5. If evidence of bullying is found on a phone, a screenshot or recording of the evidence will be taken, using a suitable academy device. This evidence will be shared with the academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and relevant Head of Year for follow up.
6. Should staff determine that messages, or images, relating to bullying, will cause further harm to the victim, staff members will instruct the student to delete the images from their phone.
7. If staff are concerned that the images constitute evidence that an offence has been committed, the phone will be confiscated, and the academy will seek advice from the Safer School's Police Officer.

3b. Youth Produced Sexual Imagery/Child Sexual Abuse Imagery

1. Only members of staff authorised by the headteacher are authorised to conduct a search for YPSI or CSA imagery. These staff are limited to female members of the safeguarding team, female members of the Leadership team or the Headteacher.
2. All staff must consult with the DSL for guidance before conducting a search for YPSI or CSA imagery.
3. An attempt will be made to contact parents of students identified as possibly being in possession of a YPSI or CSA image, to advise that their child's phone will be confiscated so that it can be searched.
4. If a parent is not contactable, the search may proceed without parental consent to safeguard students at the academy. Where possible, staff will ensure they leave a message for the parent before the search takes place and a follow up contact will be made after the search.



5. If a student discloses when they meet with staff that a YPSI or CSA image has been sent to them and that they have it on their phone, staff must not ask to see it and the phone must be switched off and confiscated.
6. If it becomes evident during a search that a YPSI or CSA image is present on the student's phone, staff should not open the image. Staff should switch off and confiscate the phone at this point.
7. Any confiscated phones must be submitted to the DSL.
8. Any instance of YPSI or CSA imagery will be reported to the Safer School's Police Officer by the DSL, on the day of the incident. The Safer School's Police Officer will guide the academy with regards to next steps.
9. In some instances, the Safer School's Police Officer may arrange a meeting with the parents, child and DSL as a follow up.
10. The Safer School's Police Officer will provide guidance on what action will be taken in relation to the child's phone.

4. Screening

At the time of writing this policy, Clapton Girls' Academy do not conduct any screening of students. If any plans are proposed to introduce screening, students and parents will be consulted prior to any changes being implemented.

5. Links with other policies

This policy is closely linked to the following policies:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy (no. 34)
- Child Protection Policy (no. 14)
- Suspensions Policy (no. 39)
- SEN and Inclusion Policy (no. 24)
- Use of Reasonable Force (no.37)