



# CELT Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy

Adopted by (body): CELT Trustees

REWARDS EMOTIONAL WELL BEING  
 ROUTINES MOTIVATION SUPPORTIVE  
 SAFEGUARDING CARING  
 CELEBRATION SAFE  
 THRIVE INCLUSIVE RESPECTFUL  
 VALUES READY  
 POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- Collaborate** Ability to work effectively as a team
- Empower** Ability to take initiative and problem solve in order to improve performance
- Lead** To lead by example and achieve shared goals
- Transformation** Ability to recognise a need for change and adapt accordingly



## CELT Vision

---

**Our vision is for our trust to be a learning organisation in the truest sense.**

At the heart of our vision for education is a self-improving school-led system which has the best evidence-led practice and in which every child fulfils their potential. This is a learning community in which:

- Our leaders are driven by moral purpose. They are outwards focused and not afraid to take risks to achieve system transformation. The focus of policy is on continually improving the quality of teaching.
- Our teachers strive to be outstanding. They work across organisational boundaries to promote a collective sharing of knowledge, skills, expertise and experience in order to deepen pupil learning.
- The individual talents and strengths of our pupils are recognised and nurtured. A passion and curiosity for learning is sustained in every child from the moment they join us. A CELT pupil leaves our family of academies with a purpose, and the confidence to fulfil that purpose.
- Our parents are engaged in our learning community and actively work in partnership with us to raise the level of attainment and aspiration of every child.

## CELT Mission

---

**“Learning together to help every child achieve more.”**

We believe there is no limit to what every child can achieve, and that every child deserves the chance to fulfil their potential.

As a learning community we are on an ambitious journey. We want to deliver a model for education in the 21st century which instils curiosity and a love for learning in every child so that they develop into young adults who contribute to humanity, follow their passions, and think for themselves.

By learning and improving together – as part of a global learning community – we create much richer and more sustainable opportunities for rigorous transformation than can be provided by any one of our academies alone.

**COLLABORATE  
EMPOWER  
LEAD  
TRANSFORM**

Should you require further information, please contact  
The Governance Officer.  
Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT), Atlantic Centre,  
Trenance Leisure Park, Newquay, Cornwall TR7 2LZ

Telephone: 01637 800293  
[www.celtrust.org](http://www.celtrust.org)

Email: [ccarter@gov.celtrust.org](mailto:ccarter@gov.celtrust.org)

# Contents

---

Introduction	4
Before the Search	5
During the Search	6
The Extent of the Search	7
Strip Searching	8
After a Search	8
Recording Search	9
Analysis of Recording	10
Informing Parents	10
Confiscate and Seize Items	11
Screening	12
History of Changes	13

## **“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility”**

At Cornwall Education Learning Trust (CELT) we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and we expect all Trustees, Governors, staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy is to ensure that all children with medical conditions, in terms of both physical and mental health, are properly supported in school so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.

# 1

## Introduction

Ensuring school staff and pupils/students feel safe and secure is vital to establishing calm and supportive environments conducive to learning. Using searching, screening and confiscation powers appropriately is an important way to ensure pupil/student and staff welfare is protected and helps schools establish an environment where everyone is safe (DFE Screening searching and confiscation guidance.)

Schools and their staff are an important part of the wider safeguarding system for pupils/students. This system is described in the statutory guidance Working together to safeguard children. Keeping children safe in education makes clear that all school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which pupils/students can learn.

If an investigation or an allegation leads to reasonable suspicion and the search of a pupil's clothes, bags and lockers is deemed appropriate, a search may be carried out. Designated staff will follow the latest DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation when conducting a search.

Staff will take into consideration the age and needs of pupils/students being searched or screened. This includes the individual needs or learning difficulties of pupils/students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and making reasonable adjustments that may be required where a pupil/student has a disability.

Headteacher's will oversee the practice of searching to ensure that a culture of safe, proportionate and appropriate searching is maintained, which safeguards the welfare of all pupils/students and staff with support from the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

Each Headteacher will ensure that a sufficient number of staff are appropriately trained in how to lawfully and safely search a pupil/student who is not co-operating, so that these trained staff can support and advise other members of staff if this situation arises.

# 2

## Before the Search

At CELT the member of staff conducting the search must be a member of the senior leadership team, safeguarding team or been authorised by the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Before the search the authorised member of staff should make an assessment of how urgent the need for a search is and should consider the risk to other pupils/students and staff.

The authorised member of staff who has lawful control of the child can search a pupil/student with their consent to look for any item banned by the school rules.

Before any search takes place, the member of staff conducting the search should explain to the pupil/student why they are being searched, how and where the search is going to take place and give them the opportunity to ask any questions.

The authorised member of staff should always seek the co-operation of the pupil/student before conducting a search. If the pupil/student is not willing to co-operate with the search, the member of staff should consider why this is.

Reasons might include that they:

- are in possession of a prohibited item;
- do not understand the instruction;
- are unaware of what a search may involve; or
- have had a previous distressing experience of being searched.

If a pupil/student continues to refuse to co-operate, the member of staff may sanction for not following a reasonable instruction, ensuring that they are responding to misbehaviour consistently and fairly.

Schools have the power to search a pupil/student without the pupil's consent if they suspect they are in possession of 'prohibited items'. Prohibited items that can be searched for without consent include:

- knives or weapons;
- alcohol;
- illegal drugs;
- stolen items;
- e-cigarettes, tobacco and cigarette papers;
- fireworks;
- pornographic images; or
- articles that the member of staff reasonably suspects have been or could be used to commit an offence or cause personal injury to, or damage to property of, any person (including the pupil).

A member of staff can use reasonable force to search for any prohibited items but not to search for items which are identified only in the school rules. Before using reasonable force the member of staff should consider whether conducting the search will prevent the pupil/student harming themselves or others, damaging property or from causing disorder.

# 3

## During the Search

### Where

An appropriate location for the search should be found, typically a member of the senior leadership team office or safeguarding office. Where possible, this should be away from other pupils/students. The search must only take place on the school premises or where the member of staff has lawful control or charge of the pupil, for example on a school trip.

### Who

The law states the member of staff conducting the search must be of the same sex as the pupil/student being searched. There must be another member of staff present as a witness to the search.

There is a limited exception to this rule. This is that a member of staff can search a pupil/student of the opposite sex and/or without a witness present only:

- if the member of staff carrying out the search reasonably believes there is risk that serious harm will be caused to a person if the search is not carried out as a matter of urgency; and
- in the time available, it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out by a member of staff who is same sex as the pupil/student or it is not reasonably practicable for the search to be carried out in the presence of another member of staff.

# 4

## The Extent of the Search

Pupils/Students must be first asked to empty pockets, bags and check lockers (if applicable) themselves.

When conducting a search pupils/students must not be required to remove any clothing other than outer clothing. 'Outer clothing' is defined as any item of clothing that is not worn wholly next to the skin or immediately over a garment that is being worn as underwear, as well as hats, shoes, boots or scarves.

The search will include all pupils/students possessions - this means any goods over which the pupil/student has or appears to have control - this includes desks, lockers and bags.

The designated member of staff is able to search lockers and desks or other personal spaces at the school for any item provided the pupil/student agrees.

The member of staff may use a metal detector to assist with the search.

# 5

## Strip Searching

Strip searches (a search involving the removal of more than outer clothing) on academy premises can only be carried out by police officers under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) Codes A and B. While the decision to undertake the strip search itself and its conduct are police matters, school staff retain a duty of care to the pupil(s) involved and should advocate for pupil/student wellbeing at all times.

Before calling police into the school, staff should assess and balance the risk of a potential strip search on the pupil's mental and physical wellbeing and the risk of not recovering the suspected item. Staff should consider whether introducing the potential for a strip search through police involvement is absolutely necessary by consulting with the designated safeguarding lead and Headteacher, and should always ensure that other appropriate, less invasive approaches have been exhausted. Unless there is an immediate risk of harm and where reasonably possible, staff should inform a parent of the pupil/student suspected of concealing an item in advance of the search, even if the parent is not acting as the appropriate adult.

# 6

## After a Search

Whether or not any items have been found as a result of any search, schools should consider whether the reasons for the search, the search itself, or the outcome of the search give cause to suspect that the pupil/student is suffering, or is likely to suffer harm, and/or whether any specific support is needed.

Where this may be the case, the safeguarding team will consider if pastoral support, an early help intervention or a referral to children's social care is appropriate. If any prohibited items are found during the search, the member of staff should follow the guidance set out in the paragraph around confiscation.

If a pupil/student is found to be in possession of a prohibited item, then the staff member should alert safeguarding team and the pupil/student should be sanctioned in line with the school's behaviour policy to ensure consistency of approach.



# 7

## Recording Search

Any search by a member of staff or police officer should be recorded in the school's safeguarding reporting system CPOMS, including whether or not an item is found. This will allow the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) to identify possible risks and initiate a safeguarding response if required.

Staff must record against the pupil/student who was searched CPOMS record:

- the date, time and location of the search;
- who conducted the search and any other adults or pupils/students present;
- what was being searched for;
- the reason for searching;
- what items, if any, were found; and
- what follow-up action was taken as a consequence of the search.

# 8

## Recording Search

Any search by a member of staff or police officer should be recorded in the school's safeguarding reporting system CPOMS, including whether or not an item is found. This will allow the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) to identify possible risks and initiate a safeguarding response if required.

Staff must record against the pupil/student who was searched CPOMS record:

- the date, time and location of the search;
- who conducted the search and any other adults or pupils/students present;
- what was being searched for;
- the reason for searching;
- what items, if any, were found; and
- what follow-up action was taken as a consequence of the search.

# 9

## Analysis of Recording

Safeguarding Leads will review the frequency of searches and the numbers to consider whether the searches fall disproportionately on any particular groups of pupils/students by analysing the recorded data.

In such cases where searching is falling disproportionately on any group or groups, they should consider whether any actions should be taken to prevent this.

This information is reported to the Trust Safeguarding Lead on a half termly basis.

# 10

## Informing Parents

Schools should reinforce the whole-school approach by building and maintaining positive relationships with parents. Parents/Carers should always be informed of any search that has taken place, and the outcome of the search as soon as is practicable. If the search is as a result of a safety plan, this will be agreed with parents and pupils/students in advance and regularly reviewed.

A member of staff should inform the parents of what, if anything, has been confiscated and the resulting action the school has taken, including any sanctions applied.

Any complaints about searching, screening or confiscation should be dealt with through the normal school complaints procedure.

## Confiscate and Seize Items

Staff may confiscate or seize items in the possession of pupils/students that pose a risk to staff or pupils/students, are illegal or banned by the school or is evidence in relation to an offence and may confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary sanction so long as it is reasonable in the circumstances.

Confiscation of a pupil's property will be proportionate and aimed at maintaining an environment conducive to learning and one which safeguards the rights of other pupils/students to be educated. Where appropriate a member of staff may retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a punishment and are protected from liability for damage to, or loss of, any confiscated items.

Staff may seize an electronic device to examine any data or files on the device if they think there is good reason to do so. These data or files may be erased before returning the item if they believe there is good reason to do this.

If the member of staff conducting the search suspects they may find an indecent image of a child, the member of staff should never intentionally view the image, and must never copy, print, share, store or save such images. When an incident might involve an indecent image of a child and/or video, the member of staff should confiscate the device, avoid looking at the device and refer the incident to the designated safeguarding lead. Staff will have regard to the UK Council for Internet Safety advice for managing incidences of sharing nudes and semi-nudes when managing these issues.

The authorised staff member will take into account all relevant circumstances and use their professional judgement to determine whether the item should be delivered to the police, retained, returned to the owner or disposed of. In taking into account all relevant circumstances the member of staff should consider: whether it is safe to dispose of the item; and whether and when it is safe to return the item.

## Screening

Screening can help provide reassurance to pupils/students, staff and parents that the school is taking measures to create a calm, safe and supportive environment.

Schools' statutory power to make rules on pupil/student behaviour and their duties as employers in relation to the safety of staff, pupils/students and visitors enables them to impose a requirement that pupils/students undergo screening.

The school may require pupils/students to undergo screening by a walk-through or hand-held metal detector (arch or wand) regardless of whether they suspect the pupil/student of having a weapon and without the pupil's consent. If the pupil/student does not agree to undergo the screening the school has the right to stop them from entering the premises and will treat the pupil's absence as unauthorised.

Before considering the installation and use of any technology for screening, the headteacher will consult with the local police who may be able to provide advice about whether installation of these devices is appropriate and inform pupils/students and parents.

# Appendix History of Changes

Version	Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change
1.0	29.08.2024		Original Draft	