All Saints Church of England

Infant and Nursery School

Selston Church of England

Infant and Nursery School

Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy

Opening hearts and minds through the grace and love of God

Created: September 2026
Next Review Date: September 2027

ALL SAINTS CHURCH OF ENGLAND INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

SELSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

VISION STATEMENT

Opening hearts and minds through the grace and love of God

At All Saints Church of England Infant and Nursery School and Selston Church of England Infant and Nursery School children always come first and we try to nourish, challenge, prepare and inspire them within a Christian ethos.

We believe in valuing all who contribute towards the successful running of our schools including children, parents, carers, governors, teaching and non-teaching staff.

This Vision Statement lies at the heart of our schools' aims. It is the philosophical basis for all of the schools' policies and through these, for everything that happens in and round our schools. Our aspiration is for everyone at All Saints and Selston to:

- feel happy, secure, safe and valued at school
- develop a growing awareness of their own inner self and spirituality, and of the power of the Christian faith to transform lives
- develop healthy relationships based on care, trust, compassion and forgiveness
- show acceptance for and understanding of others who may have different beliefs or needs
- strive for the highest standards of achievement, developing the confidence and skills to be independent, motivated and self-disciplined learners
- have a positive approach to life, contributing to the well-being of the community and building hope for the future

We hope that children will leave our schools with open hearts and minds, ready to respond to the opportunities that lie before them and to experience the joy of life in all its fullness.

Policy:	Searching, Screening and Confiscation
Approved by:	Local Governing Body
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VERSION CONTROL			
VERSION	**DATE**	**AUTHOR**	**CHANGES**
2026	07.09.26	JR	New policy

Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the approach of All Saints and Selston to searching, screening and confiscation. It is based upon the Department for Education's guidance *Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools* and should be read alongside the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Positive Handling Policy, Online Safety Policy, SEND Policy and Health and Safety Policy. The policy reflects the statutory powers available to schools whilst recognising the particular developmental needs of children aged two to seven years.

As Church of England schools, we believe that every child is uniquely created and loved by God. We are committed to providing a nurturing, inclusive and safe environment where all children are able to flourish academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Our practice is rooted in Christian values of dignity, compassion, wisdom, justice, forgiveness and respect. Any action taken under this policy will seek to uphold these values whilst ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.

The welfare of the child is paramount. Staff will always seek to resolve concerns in a manner which is supportive, proportionate and appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child. Situations requiring formal searching powers are expected to be rare within an infant and nursery setting; however, it is important that staff understand the legal powers available to them and the procedures that should be followed should concerns arise.

2. Aims

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all children, staff and visitors are kept safe and that the school community understands the circumstances in which items may be searched for, screened for or confiscated. The policy aims to support staff in responding appropriately to concerns, while ensuring that children's rights, dignity and emotional wellbeing are respected at all times.

The policy seeks to maintain a calm and orderly learning environment in which pupils feel secure and where risks to safety are addressed promptly. It also aims to ensure that any safeguarding concerns identified through searching or confiscation procedures are recognised and acted upon in accordance with statutory guidance.

3. Legal Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to:

- Education Act 1996;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Schools (Specification and Disposal of Articles) Regulations 2012;
- Human Rights Act 1998;

- Equality Act 2010;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version);
- Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff;
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies are in place to safeguard children and maintain a safe learning environment.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy, ensuring that staff understand their responsibilities and monitoring the effectiveness of the procedures outlined within it. The Headteacher will ensure that any search or confiscation is carried out lawfully, proportionately and with full regard for safeguarding principles.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for responding to any safeguarding concerns that arise as a result of a search, confiscation or discovery of an item. The DSL will consider whether the circumstances indicate that a child may be suffering harm or may require additional support and intervention.

All staff are expected to act in accordance with this policy, placing the welfare of the child at the centre of their decision-making. Staff must report safeguarding concerns immediately and ensure that significant incidents are appropriately recorded.

5. Principles for Infant and Nursery Schools

Children attending our schools are at an early stage of development and are still learning about risk, responsibility and personal safety. Staff recognise that, on occasion, young children may bring unsuitable or unsafe items into school through curiosity, misunderstanding, imitation of adults or accidental inclusion within bags or clothing.

For this reason, our approach emphasises support and education rather than punishment. Staff will seek to resolve concerns through calm discussion, reassurance and positive relationships. Whenever possible, children will be encouraged to hand over items voluntarily and provided with age-appropriate explanations about why the item cannot remain in school.

Partnership with parents and carers is central to our approach. We believe that maintaining open and honest communication with families helps ensure children's safety and wellbeing and supports shared understanding of school expectations.

6. Screening

The schools do not routinely screen pupils.
Whilst legislation permits schools to use screening devices such as walk-through or hand-held metal detectors in certain circumstances, the use of such equipment would be highly unusual within an infant and nursery setting. Any decision to introduce screening measures would only be made in exceptional circumstances

where there was a clear and justifiable need to protect the safety of pupils, staff or visitors. Any such arrangements would be proportionate, age appropriate and implemented with due regard for children's welfare and dignity.

7. Searching Pupils

The vast majority of concerns involving inappropriate or unsafe items will be resolved through discussion with the child. Staff may ask a child to open a bag, empty a pocket or show the contents of a tray, drawer or coat pocket. Such requests should be made calmly and respectfully.

Where a child cooperates, staff may inspect belongings with the child's agreement. In most cases, particularly given the age of our pupils, this approach will be sufficient.

The law also gives Headteachers and authorised members of staff the power to search a pupil or possessions where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a prohibited item is being carried. Such circumstances would be exceptionally rare within our schools, but staff retain this power where it is necessary to protect the child or others from harm. Any search conducted under these powers will be carried out sensitively and proportionately, taking account of the child's age, emotional wellbeing and individual needs.

Where possible, a second member of staff will be present. Searches will take place away from other children and every effort will be made to preserve the child's dignity.

8. Communicating with Children

Staff understand that how adults communicate during a search can significantly affect how a child experiences the situation. Children should never be made to feel frightened, accused or ashamed.

Adults will use language that is reassuring, supportive and appropriate to the child's age and understanding. For younger children, staff may say, "Can you show me what's in your pocket?" or "Let's look together and make sure everything is safe." For older pupils, staff may explain, "I need to check something because part of my job is helping everyone stay safe."

Children will be reassured that adults are there to help. Staff may use phrases such as, "You are not in trouble," "Let's sort this out together," or "Thank you for helping me." Such language reinforces trust, promotes cooperation and helps children feel secure.
Children will always be given opportunities to ask questions and express any worries they may have.

9. Supporting Children with SEND

The schools are committed to ensuring that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities receive appropriate support during any searching or confiscation process.
Staff recognise that some children may find unexpected requests confusing or distressing and that communication difficulties, sensory needs or anxiety may affect how a child responds. Behaviours which may appear resistant or non-compliant may, in fact, be manifestations of communication differences, sensory overload or emotional distress.

When working with children with SEND, staff will take account of the child's developmental stage, communication needs, support plans and any advice contained within an Education, Health and Care Plan. Communication may be adapted through the use of visual prompts, simplified language, familiar routines or support from a trusted adult.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, staff may allow a child additional time to process information and respond. For some children, a visual timetable, now-and-next board or familiar communication system may be used to explain what is happening.

Staff may use simplified language such as, "Show me," "Let's look together," or "You are safe." They may also provide reassurance through clear, predictable explanations of what will happen next.

The schools recognise that children with SEND can be particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect, bullying and exploitation. Therefore, any concerns arising from a search or confiscation involving a child with SEND will be carefully considered from a safeguarding perspective and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

10. Prohibited and Unsafe Items

The Department for Education identifies certain items as prohibited. These include knives and weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, stolen items, fireworks, tobacco and cigarette papers, vaping devices, pornographic images and any article that has been used, or is likely to be used, to cause injury, commit an offence or damage property.

In an infant and nursery context, staff are more likely to encounter concerns relating to medication brought without permission, sharp objects, matches, lighters, choking hazards, mobile phones or objects that may cause distress or injury to others.

The school's response will always be proportionate to the level of risk presented by the item and the circumstances in which it was brought into school.

11. Extent of Searches

Where a search is considered necessary, staff may examine possessions such as bags, trays, drawers, desks, coat pockets and other items belonging to the child.

Any search must be reasonable in the circumstances and must never be conducted in a way which is unnecessarily intrusive, humiliating or degrading.

12. Strip Searches

School staff must never conduct a strip search.

A strip search is defined as a search involving the removal of more than outer clothing. If circumstances arise where a strip search appears necessary, staff must contact the police and follow statutory safeguarding procedures. The welfare, dignity and rights of the child must remain central throughout the process.

13. Confiscation of Items

Staff may confiscate any item that is prohibited by law, presents a safety risk, causes disruption or breaches school rules.

Given the age of our pupils, confiscated items will normally be returned directly to parents or carers rather than to the child. Staff will explain clearly and sensitively to the child why the item has been removed and, where appropriate, use the experience as an opportunity to reinforce learning about safety and responsibility.

14. Disposal of Prohibited Items

When prohibited items are found, staff will act in accordance with statutory guidance.
Weapons and knives will be handed to the police as soon as reasonably practicable. Illegal drugs will usually be passed to the police for appropriate action. Fireworks, alcohol, tobacco products and vaping devices may be retained and disposed of safely by the school. Stolen property will normally be returned to its owner or handed to the police where necessary.

15. Electronic Devices

Where electronic devices are brought to school contrary to school rules, staff may confiscate them.

If there is reason to believe that a device contains material that could place a child at risk, staff may examine relevant content in accordance with Department for Education guidance. Where any material suggests abuse, exploitation, criminal activity or contains indecent images of children, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately and safeguarding procedures followed. Staff must not copy, share or distribute such material.

16. Safeguarding Considerations

Searching and confiscation are not solely behavioural matters; they can also be safeguarding matters.

Staff will consider whether the reason for a search, the nature of the item found or the child's behaviour may suggest wider safeguarding concerns. For example, a child bringing medication, sharp objects or other inappropriate items into school may indicate a lack of supervision, exposure to risk or other welfare concerns.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed without delay. Appropriate action will then be taken in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and local safeguarding partnership arrangements.

17. Informing Parents and Carers

The schools value strong partnerships with parents and carers and recognise their important role in promoting children's safety and wellbeing.

Parents will normally be informed as soon as reasonably practicable whenever a search has taken place, an item has been confiscated or a concern has arisen. Communication will be factual, sensitive and focused on the child's welfare. In the rare event that informing parents immediately could place a child at increased risk of harm, safeguarding procedures will be followed and advice sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and relevant agencies.

18. Use of Reasonable Force

There may occasionally be circumstances in which reasonable force is necessary to prevent injury, prevent serious damage to property or maintain the safety of pupils and staff.

Any use of reasonable force will be lawful, proportionate and consistent with the school's Positive Handling Policy. The welfare and dignity of the child will remain paramount and all incidents involving reasonable force will be recorded and reviewed appropriately.

19. Recording and Monitoring

A written record will be kept whenever a significant search takes place, a prohibited item is found, reasonable force is used, police involvement is required or safeguarding concerns arise.

Records will include details of the circumstances, actions taken, outcomes, parental communication and any safeguarding follow-up. Records will be maintained in accordance with the school's data protection and record management procedures. The Headteacher and Governing Body will monitor incidents in order to identify any emerging patterns, training needs or policy amendments that may be required.

20. Equality and Inclusion

The schools will ensure that powers relating to searching, screening and confiscation are exercised fairly, consistently and without discrimination.

All children will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment or family background. Reasonable adjustments will be made where required to ensure that children with disabilities or additional needs are not disadvantaged.

21. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body or sooner if changes to legislation, safeguarding requirements or Department for Education guidance make this necessary.

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored through safeguarding records, behaviour records, incident reports and feedback from staff, governors and families.

Associated Policies: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Behaviour Policy; Positive Handling Policy; SEND Policy; Online Safety Policy; Health and Safety Policy.
This policy has been written with regard to the Department for Education's "Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools" and "Behaviour in Schools" guidance